

pix'n love  
EDITIONS



THE HISTORY OF  
**SONIC**<sup>TM</sup>  
THE HEDGEHOG



©SEGA

LONDON BOROUGH OF  
HACKNEY LIBRARIES

HK12001618

Bertrams	09/05/2014
GRA	£25.99
	21/01/2014



# SONIC *THE* HEDGEHOG™

L.B. OF HACKNEY



91300000920540

**The History of Sonic (Softcover Edition)**

is edited by Les Editions Pix'n Love

[www.pixnlovepublishing.com](http://www.pixnlovepublishing.com)

Any reproduction in whole or in part on any medium or use of the information contained herein is prohibited without the prior written consent of the rights holder.

Any such representation or reproduction by any means whatsoever would constitute counterfeiting prohibited and penalized by Articles L. 335-2 and subsequent of the French intellectual property code.

Les Editions Pix'n Love logo is a registered trademark of Les Editions Pix'n Love, registered in France and other countries.  
Pixnlovepublishing.com is a registered trademark of Les Editions Pix'n Love, registered in France and other countries.

All pictures and artworks are copyrighted to their respective owners.

The opinions stated in this book are the sole responsibility of the author.



SEGA is not responsible for the contents of this book.

Les Editions Pix'n Love has made every effort to determine that the information contained in this book is accurate.

English edition published by UDON Entertainment Corp.

118 Tower Hill Road, C1, PO Box 20008, Richmond Hill, Ontario, L4K 0K0, Canada

**PIX'N LOVE:**

Editorial coordination: Marc Pétronille, William Audureau

Licensing: Jean-Marc Demoly

Texts: Régis Monterrin, Benjamin Perray, Corentin Lamy, William Audureau, Marc Pétronille, Douglas Alves, Kevin Feuillois

Artistic Direction: Luc Pétronille

Layout: Luc Pétronille, Vincent Montagnana, Marc Pétronille, Jenny

Translated from the French by Olivier Brailon

Proof reading: Mark Ambrose, Anne Dubois, Chris Murphy, Helen Sheridan, Dan Yardley

**UDON:**

Chief of Operations: Erik Ko

Managing Editor: Matt Moylan

Project Manager: Jim Zubkavich

Associate Editor: Ash Paulsen

Director of Marketing: Christopher Butcher

Marketing Manager: Stacy King

Proof Reading: Ash Paulsen, Bridget Oates

Thanks to Cindy Chau at SEGA of America, Inc.

[www.UDONentertainment.com](http://www.UDONentertainment.com)

© Les Editions Pix'n Love 2012

© SEGA

ISBN-13: 978-1-926778-96-9

ISBN-10: 1-926778-96-0

First Printing: November 2013

Printed in Hong Kong



Rebellious, vibrant, dynamic... Sonic is to video games what the Rolling Stones are to rock'n roll! Ever since he first appeared on the Mega Drive, Game Gear and Master System in 1991, SEGA's flagship hero quickly became the icon of a whole generation. Who among his three creators, Yuji Naka, Naoto Ōshima and Hirokazu Yasuhara, could have predicted such a fate?

The blue hedgehog not only left a permanent impression on players around the world, he became an emblematic icon beyond the field of video games. Twenty years after his first steps in the Green Hill Zone, we recount all his adventures in this unique book written as a vibrant tribute...



# CONTENTS



## HISTORY 010

• Zone 0: Before Sonic	012
• Zone 1: Genesis	020
• Zone 2: A New Face in the Magazines	034
• Zone 3: The Golden Age	042
• Zone 4: The Third Dimension	054
• Zone 5: Dreamcast, the Return of the Speedy Blue Hedgehog	066
• Zone 6: The Aftermath of the Dreamcast	076
• Bonus Zone: Interview with Yuji Naka	090
• Bonus Zone: Interview with Naoto Ōshima	096
• Bonus Zone: 20 Questions for Takashi Iizuka	102

## 2D GAMES 110

• Sonic The Hedgehog	112
• Sonic The Hedgehog 2	118
• Sonic The Hedgehog 3	124
• Sonic & Knuckles	128
• Sonic CD	130
• SEGASonic The Hedgehog	132
• Sonic 3D Blast	133
• Sonic The Hedgehog 4	134

## 3D GAMES 136

• Sonic Adventure	138
• Sonic Adventure 2	144
• Sonic Heroes	148
• Shadow The Hedgehog	150
• Sonic The Hedgehog (2006)	152
• Sonic Unleashed	153
• Sonic and the Secret Rings	154
• Sonic and the Black Knight	156
• Sonic Colors	158
• Sonic Generations	160



## HANDHELD GAMES

162

• Sonic The Hedgehog	164
• Sonic The Hedgehog 2	165
• Sonic Chaos	166
• Sonic Triple Trouble	167
• Sonic Blast	168
• Sonic The Hedgehog Pocket Adventure	169
• Sonic Advance	170
• Sonic Advance 2	171
• Sonic Advance 3	172
• Sonic Rush	173
• Sonic Rush Adventure	174
• Sonic Rivals	175
• Sonic Rivals 2	176
• Sonic Colors	177
• Mobile Sonic Games (Sonic Cafe Series/Sonic N/Sonic Jam)	178
• Sonic Generations	180

## SPIN-OFF GAMES

182

• Waku Waku Sonic Patrol Car/Sonic Eraser	184
• SEGASonic Cosmo Fighter/Sonic Spinball	185
• Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine	186
• Wacky Worlds/Sonic Gameworld	188
• Sonic Drift	189
• Tails and The Music Maker/Knuckles' Chaotix	190
• Sonic Drift 2	191
• Tails' Skypatrol/Tails' Adventure	192
• Sonic Labyrinth/Sonic's Schoolhouse	193
• Sonic The Fighters	194
• Sonic R	196
• Sonic Shuffle	198
• Sonic Pinball Party	199
• Sonic Battle	200
• SEGA Superstars	202
• Sonic Riders	203
• Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity	204
• Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™	206
• Sonic Chronicles: The Dark Brotherhood	208
• Super Smash Bros. Brawl	210
• SEGA Superstars Tennis/Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™	211
• Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing	212
• Sonic Free Riders/Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™	213

## CHARACTERS

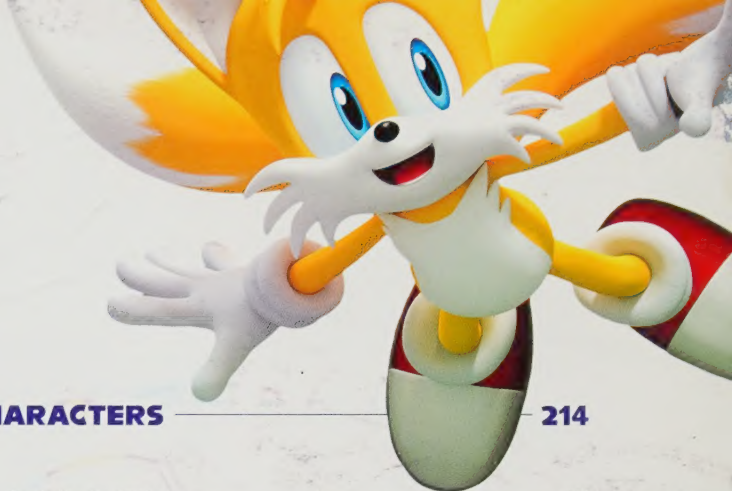
214

• Sonic the Hedgehog	216
• Miles "Tails" Prower	226
• Knuckles the Echidna	232
• Dr. Eggman	238
• Amy Rose	244
• Shadow the Hedgehog	248
• Silver the Hedgehog	252
• Blaze the Cat	254
• Vector the Crocodile	256
• Cream the Rabbit	258
• Rouge the Bat	260
• Chao	262
• Chaos	264
• E-102 Gamma	266
• Charmy Bee	268
• Espio the Chameleon	270
• Big the Cat	272
• Jet the Hawk	274
• Wave the Swallow	276
• Storm the Albatross	278
• Metal Sonic	280
• Tikal	282
• Badniks & Bosses	284

## EXTRA ZONE

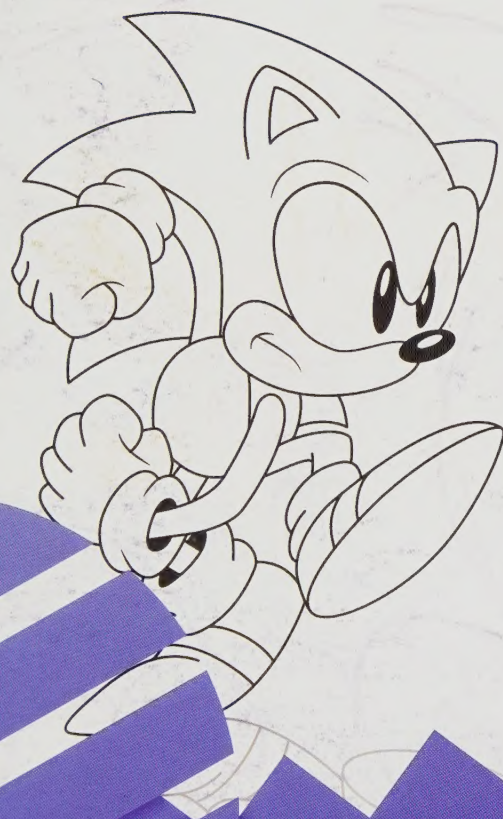
290

• Sonic: Funny Cameos	292
• Thanks & Sources	299





# HISTORY











# HISTORY

Zone 0

# BEFORE SONIC

Once upon a time, long before a certain blue hedgehog was born, there was a company called Service Games. This is the story of its rise to fame, the beginnings of a young programmer named Yuji Naka, and the trials and tribulations of Alex Kidd, a symbol of an underdog's first confrontation with the unchallenged king of the times: Nintendo.

Our story begins in 1940, when three entrepreneurial Americans settled in Honolulu, Hawaii's capital. Martin Bromely, Irving Bromberg, and James Humpert started a company called Standard Games after they got the idea to entertain the local U.S. Army troops with one-armed bandits, jukeboxes, and pinball machines. However, the birth of SEGA did not take place until the 1960s, after a relocation to Tokyo under the name Service Games and a meeting with Rosen Enterprises (a photo booth company founded by another American settled in Japan, David Rosen). Indeed, in 1965, in order to compete with Taito in the growing market of entertainment machines, both companies merged into a new entity whose name was composed of the first syllables in the words "Service Games", marking the birth of SEGA Enterprises.



## THE ARCADE PIONEER

In 1968, the young company released *Periscope*, an arcade game in which players looked through a periscope and fired torpedoes at passing enemy ships. Housed in the largest arcade cabinet ever created at the time, the electro-mechanical submarine game was an international success. In a nice turn of events born from the merging of two import companies, SEGA became an exporter. The company quickly modernized the slot machine industry by adding sound and special effects to the games. SEGA would later play an evolutionary role in the transition of electro-mechanical games into video games in the 1970s. The first SEGA logo was red. In 1976, the logo was changed to the emblematic SEGA blue and it has remained the same ever since.

The hedgehog's story  
was already beginning  
to take root in  
**1940**,  
when three Americans  
settled in  
**Honolulu.**

On the right, an illustration of the *Periscope* arcade cabinet (1966), with an old version of SEGA's logo.

# SEGA

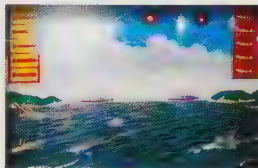


## SEGA, a driving force in the arcade sector

With the release of *Periscope* in 1968, SEGA was established as one of the pioneers in the video game industry. It was this dedication to technical innovation and rapid growth that would one day inspire the creation of its speedy mascot, Sonic the Hedgehog.

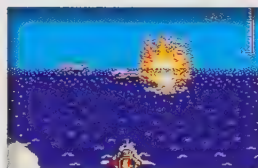
### PERISCOPE (1968)

This electromagnetic submarine simulator was SEGA's first game, and also one of the first prototype video games to offer a dedicated sound system (consisting of beeping sounds).



### SUBROC-3D (1982)

This shooting game marked the very first attempt at stereoscopic 3D gameplay, thanks to an optical device that filtered images between both eyes to create a three-dimensional illusion.



### ASTRON BELT (1983)

With *Astron Belt*, SEGA became the first company to offer games on optical discs, using laser disc technology – a feat then seen as visionary.



### R-360 G-LOC AIR BATTLE (1990)

Already on the cutting edge of technology, SEGA went even further with this immersive flight simulator and its fully rotating cabinet.



### TIME TRAVELER (1991)

SEGA was also a pioneer in the field of volumetric displays with this laser disc-based game. It used a convex screen with a stereoscopic device to create the illusion that you could move the characters.



Business thrived over the next decade. By the 1980s, SEGA was firmly established as a pioneer in Japanese arcade games, and it made a major impact on gamers in the United States thanks to a little leaping frog in 1981. Frogger was such a big hit it overshadowed *Pac-Man* and *Donkey Kong* in some venues. As SEGA continued to achieve one technical feat after another, the firm proved that it was one of the most innovative companies in the industry. In 1982, *Zaxxon* became the first shooting game with an isometric view, and *SUBROC-3D* marked the first use of 3D in video games. *Astron Belt* arrived in 1983 and was the first game to use laser technology, shortly before *Dragon's Lair*. Nintendo's Famicom debuted in July of that same year, along with the SG-1000 – a forerunner to the Master System – and both joined the new wave of Japanese home game consoles with interchangeable cartridges. It was around this time that American companies like Atari, Coleco, and Mattel started pulling away from a crisis-stricken video game market. This didn't deter Japanese manufacturers like Nintendo, however, who were confident that their new home consoles would succeed. At the time, SEGA played a productive role in this sector.





## SKY BLUE ADVENTURES

Between 1982 and 1984, the video game industry went through a terrible crisis, which marked a turning point in SEGA's history. Gulf & Western, which was then the company's main shareholder with a 20% stake, sold SEGA's manufacturing division to the American pinball manufacturing company Bally. It was a major strategic decision that turned SEGA into more of a game creator than manufacturer, at least in arcade venues. David Rosen resigned from his position as CEO of SEGA in 1983 and handed the reins over to Japan-based Hayao Nakayama, who was the CEO of a company that SEGA had purchased a few years earlier. Nakayama and Rosen together bought the rest of

the shares for about £33 million (\$52 million). It was Nakayama-san who made the decision to give SEGA a mascot.

From Honolulu to Tokyo, the company had come a long way. Both cultures made a permanent imprint on SEGA that is still reflected in the company's brand today, combining Hawaii's azure blue skies and cool attitude with Japan's technical virtuosity and design sense. Yet even if the beginnings of the "Sonic culture" were already there, SEGA did not come up with their trailblazing mascot right away. When the company launched into the video game market on an international scale, the Master System instead gave Nintendo and Mario another rival: *Alex Kidd*.



From left to right:  
*SUB-ROC 3D* (1982),  
*Frogger* (1981),  
*Zaxxon* (1982) and  
*Astron Belt* (1983).



© Benjamin Peray

## A RECRUIT NAMED YUJI NAKA

The story of Sonic is inseparable from the man who helped create him, Yuji Naka. He dreamed of making it big in the video game industry and began his studies in the early 1980s. After learning programming on his own, he started developing demo screens and tried to animate his favorite manga character on a computer. He was fascinated by technology and made quick progress. Eager to learn, he bought many computer magazines and ended up rewriting the programs he found inside to improve them.

In 1983, Naka entered a programming contest launched by Enix and worked night and day without rest to bring his ambitious 3D shooting game to life (source: SEGA Meisaku Album Vol. 1). Unfortunately, while it seemed he was set to win, the ambitious young programmer fell into his own trap. Indeed, he thought big – maybe too big – and he did not manage to finish his game on time, unlike Yuji Horii, who would go on to become the creator of *Dragon Quest*. This missed opportunity did not put an end to young Naka's hopes, however.

More intent than ever before on working in the video game industry, he decided to apply for jobs at several established arcade companies. His first choice would have been to join Namco, which was enjoying the success of *Pac-Man* and its sequels, along with two other arcade games Naka loved, *Rally X* and *Xevious*. Unfortunately, Namco did not open its doors to him, so the self-taught programmer had to fall back on lesser-known companies, ultimately having to choose between Taito and SEGA. He joined SEGA in April 1984 as an assistant programmer.

The story of **Sonic**  
is **inseparable**  
from the man who  
helped create him,  
Yuji  
**Naka.**



He quickly benefited from his decision. In July 1983, SEGA had released the SG-1000 video game console, and there was a need for new titles. Naka was assigned to the research and development department in charge of creating games for the modest machine. During his first month, Naka tried to create several programs. His boss entrusted him with an experimental mission: to imagine, conceive, and write a game designed for girls. His boss was so impressed by his adventurous game prototype that he decided to approve the game – entitled *Girl's Garden* – for commercial release on the SG-1000. Once more, however, the young perfectionist programmer did not meet the development deadline, and the game didn't launch until February 1985. The extended development time paid off, though – more than 40,000 copies were sold, a fairly impressive number for his first project.

Thanks to his programming talent, Naka was given new projects shortly thereafter. He was in charge of many of the SEGA Mark III

console ports of SEGA's successful arcade titles, including *OutRun* and *Space Harrier*. The challenges inherent in such a responsibility must be noted: home consoles at the time could not match the power of the more expensive arcade cabinets, and it was a programmer's job to find clever ways to port games with as few sacrifices as possible. When Naka, a race car fanatic, was tasked with programming *OutRun*, he created heavenly levels for the Ferrari driver and his girlfriend to enjoy. A cool atmosphere, endless blue skies, and impressive speed... sound familiar? Four years later, Naka worked as the main programmer on Sonic, and who could say that he wasn't still thinking about *OutRun*'s beautiful cars and exotic scenery? But the reason behind the hedgehog's birth can be traced to 1985, when a Japanese company other than SEGA was enjoying huge success with its home console. That console was the Famicom, better known in the West as the Nintendo Entertainment System, or NES.

Below, the SEGA SG-1000 and screenshots of *Girl's Garden* (released on this console in 1985), *Space Harrier* (1986), and *OutRun* (1987).



## Alex Kidd, between Miracle World and the Mushroom Kingdom

At first, *Alex Kidd in Miracle World* was supposed to be an action RPG for the Master System. But the tremendous success of *Super Mario Bros.* in autumn of 1985 led SEGA to change its plans for the game, switching it to a platformer with a lead character. The Japanese box art gives away the direct influence Miyamoto and Tezuka's game had on the production of its rival.



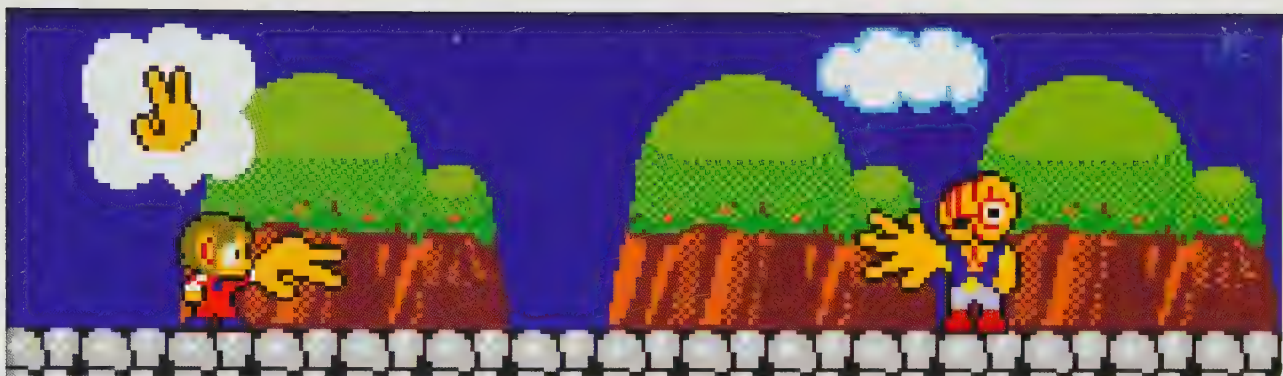
## ALEX KIDD. MARIO'S FIRST RIVAL

By 1985, SEGA had been established as a formidable arcade game designer. The Haneda company was aware of the home console market's potential, but did not have the tools to take on Nintendo's popular 8-bit console. Instead, the company launched the SEGA Mark III, the original Japanese version of the SEGA Master System, and the company's first real home video game console. Nintendo's platform, which was already two years old, had already taken a considerable lead in the market, thanks largely to the dynamic, combined imagination of Shigeru Miyamoto and Takashi Tezuka. Their phenomenal title *Super Mario Bros.* was released in September 1985, a few weeks before SEGA's new console hit the market. SEGA's Osamu Koyama had already been working for several months on what was to be an action RPG called *Miracle Land*, but SEGA changed



Above, a picture of the SEGA Mark III (launched in Japan in October 1985), the original version of the SEGA Master System.





Alex Kidd in Miracle World (Master System — 1986)

course and instead crafted a rival for Nintendo's plumber in *Alex Kidd in Miracle World*. "Since SEGA had just invested in a new console with the SEGA Mark III, in order to promote it we needed to create a game that could sell like *Super Mario Bros.*," Kohta later explained in 2002 in SEGA Meisaku Album Vol. 4. "This is why we received a clear order to develop a platform game." Instead of a top-down view, *Miracle World* adopted a side view, with an easily recognizable main character. Thus, Alex Kidd was born in 1986 and became the first character to symbolize SEGA. He was a small hero with big fists and large ears who imitated Mario's skillful jumps.

During his adventure, he found blocks that he could destroy, and he even had to swim through some levels; in many ways, it was a complete copy of *Super Mario Bros.*! The creative team felt that the resemblance was too obvious and, in order to better differentiate their game from the plumber's, they thought of a strategy: switch the attack and jump buttons! Kohta, the producer, later laughingly admitted: "Come to think of it, it doesn't make any sense."

However, SEGA's title was in fact quite different from its model. As a tribute to the original project, *Miracle Land*, the game included the exchange of money. During his journey, Alex could enter a shop and buy vehicles such as a motorbike, an offshore boat, or even a miniature pedal helicopter. The big-eared character could also find useful objects. Some – like an invincibility item – had already been seen before, while others were new and innovative, such as a cane that allowed Alex to fly briefly, and a box that released tiny soldiers who would run toward enemies. It was the end-of-level

bosses, though, that proved to be the game's main novelty. In order to defeat them, the player had to play "roshambo", better known as "rock, paper, scissors". After winning a best-of-three *roshambo* battle, the player would advance to the next stage by... eating a hamburger (or an "onigiri" – a rice ball – in the Japanese version), which signaled the end of the level.

Though *Alex Kidd* was far from perfect, it still left a lasting impression on many players, especially in Europe. A version of the game that reassigned jumping and punching to the usual buttons was included in the internal memory of most SEGA Master System and Master System II consoles. However, despite this effort to get the game in the hands of as many players as possible, SEGA found that its hero was only liked by players who were already won over by the brand. This was due to the character's lack of charisma, as well as the fact that Alex's physical characteristics and gameplay style were too similar to Mario's. By 1988, SEGA was ready to launch its next console, the Genesis (known as the Mega Drive outside of North America). The company needed to come up with a more striking hero, however, since *Alex Kidd* was not convincing enough. At first, an internal contest was launched to find a new mascot. But the results were not really... up to speed! ■



# GENESIS



Sonic's story began, officially, in June 1991, when his first on-screen adventure was released. In truth, though, the supersonic hedgehog had already been in the works for several months. It was a crazy, bumpy ride, which at one point might have ended with "Sonic the Armadillo".

Around the end of 1989, SEGA of Japan president Hayao Nakayama had become obsessed with Nintendo's success and decided to launch a huge contest within the company. All branches, both American and Japanese, were invited to take part. In order to convince potential buyers that the Genesis should be their console of choice, the heads of SEGA wanted an action game with an iconic main character. It was the "million seller" project – that is to say, the first SEGA game that was slated to sell one million copies in the hopes that it would help the Genesis become known internationally. The console had entered its second year of production in Japan, and, perhaps most importantly, it had now arrived in the West. It was this lead on Nintendo that Nakayama wanted to make the most of – and this contest was the perfect way to mobilize every member of SEGA worldwide. "It gave an unprecedented dynamic to the company in order to create a real icon of SEGA," remembers executive producer Shinobu Toyoda.

"Many employees took part in this," said Toyoda. Among them, a certain Naoto Ōshima, 26, decided to go see his boss to contribute to the creation of this new title. A big fan of U.S. comic superheroes, he had already worked as a designer on *Phantasy Star I* and *Phantasy Star II*. He made drawings of everything that came to his mind: animals, humans, humanoids, etc., which he submitted to the contest. Within a month, the heads of SEGA of Japan received more than 200 sketches, and only kept four. However, there was no hedgehog among them; instead they had a wolf, a bulldog, a humanoid with an egg-like head, and a rabbit that had been drawn by Ōshima. If these sketches were kept, it was mostly because they were original. Some were quickly rejected, like the bulldog and the wolf. Designers at SEGA had doubts about the canine's charisma and wanted to avoid comparisons with Tex Avery's famous character for the latter. The focus finally shifted to the rabbit, which seemed to have unanimous support. Ōshima was called on to move forward with the project. He then needed a programmer.



## A SUPERSONIC GHOULS 'N GHOSTS

Yuji Naka was 25 years old in 1990. He had already worked on *Phantasy Star* as well as many Master System conversions of arcade hits, such as *OutRun*, *Space Harrier*, etc. He had also made his debut on the Genesis with *Super Thunder Blade*, *Ghouls 'n Ghosts*, and *Phantasy Star II*.

Naka had been a car fanatic from his earliest days, enjoying the sensations driving provides; the scenery flashing by, or even the feeling of man and machine becoming one. How fortunate, then, that his latest experience in the field of programming had allowed him to become a master of speed, albeit high-speed scrolling! One game in particular served as a springboard: the adaptation of *Daimakaimura* on the Genesis in March 1990, better known over here as *Ghouls 'n Ghosts*. "To be honest, we were in a state of mind where we had fun trying to do everything that was technically possible," Naka admitted. "This is how, during the porting of *Ghouls 'n Ghosts* on the Mega Drive, I said to myself: 'Why not accelerate the scrolling speed to go through the levels more quickly?' If you ask me why, well actually at the time, I was having a lot of fun playing *Super Mario Bros.*, but I wanted to finish the game more quickly! This is the real starting point that led to the creation of Sonic." Unexpectedly, it turns out that Capcom's spooky platform game

was essential to the development of the little blue hedgehog. "If I hadn't worked on the port of *Ghouls 'n Ghosts*, Sonic would have probably never existed." (Source: Continue, Ohtabooks, November 2001)

After the port of *Ghouls 'n Ghosts*, Naka and his colleagues assembled a small team. They started developing a science fiction game centered on robots. Technologically, the game was impressive, but it was terribly dull to play, so the project was eventually canceled. This could have spelled trouble for the young programmer's career, but it turns out that Naka's technical achievements hadn't gone unnoticed. Shortly after, his boss called him into his office and gave him a dozen new projects. Impressed by Naka's recent technical feats, his boss added a surprising challenge, as quoted by Naka himself, "The project that is at the bottom of the stack has the code name 'Defeat Mario'. It's yours. Try to do something with it."

Through these events, the artist-programmer duo of Ôshima and Naka was born. They got to work right away and came up with a plan. Ôshima drew a rabbit with long ears that could catch and throw items at enemies, while Naka, following his work on *Ghouls 'n Ghosts*, argued for an ultra-fast game that would rely on an equally fast horizontal scrolling speed. Soon after, however, the first problems appeared.

## The Sonic Triumvirate

**YUJI NAKA:** The most famous of Sonic's fathers. Prior to Sonic's conception, this gifted, self-taught programmer had specialized in the challenging creation of arcade-to-console ports. He was the one who developed the software's code and insisted on building the adventure around the core concept of speed.

**NAOTO ÔSHIMA:** Graphic designer and artist, we forever owe him our thanks for Sonic's character design, which he scrawled in black and white after many other characters had been rejected. He also took part in the game's development and created most of the enemies

**HIROKAZU YASUHARA:** Though he joined the team a bit later and is a little less well-known than his peers, he nonetheless played a major role in the creation of Sonic the Hedgehog. He was more experienced than the other two and led the project. Above all, he was the man responsible for the game's fantastic level design and architecture.



## FROM A RABBIT TO AN ARMADILLO

Creating a fast-scrolling game starring a speedy rabbit was not an easy task. The little mammal also proved difficult to program. Catching items with its ears and then throwing them caused a sudden break in the rhythm of the action. According to Yuji Naka, the character was not suited for the high-performance game engine he was trying to set up: "What I wanted was a game where the player would have more freedom, where you could skip through a level at the speed of sound. But that also had an impact on the type of attacks you could use. But what could we do...?" (Source: 16 BIT MD Taizen, Ohtabooks, 2004) He wanted to make it so that only one button was needed to play the game, instead of two-button gameplay like in *Super Mario Bros.* Ultimately, the character and the game concept did not match, and the project seemed to be at a dead end.

Soon after, Hirokazu Yasuhara joined the team. He was a man who often worked in the shadows, but his influence was always felt. After working on the arcade version of *Altered Beast*, he was asked to supervise Naka and Ōshima's project, and to create the levels. Being more experienced, he was named as the game's lead

It was just the  
**three** of us,  
and our mission was:  
"Guys, you'll make a  
**mascot**  
for  
**SEGA.**"







Here is some of the artwork submitted during SEGA's contest to determine its mascot character.

designer, and he had to manage his team's different activities. His arrival marked the birth of Sonic Team. "It was just the three of us, and our mission was: 'Guys, you'll make a mascot for SEGA,'" Yasuhara remembered.

It was Yasuhara who found the solution to Naka and Ôshima's problem: "I said that if we used only one button and that all you could do was jump, then we had to find a way so that the player could launch an attack in the same movement. Our character had to be able to cause some damage just by jumping, and from this point, we reached the idea that he could roll into a ball while he was in the air. I think this is where it all began." Their ambitious project would therefore be built around the core concept of speed, with a hero who could break the sound barrier and spin through obstacles. But what kind of character should they use? The question still remained. After the rabbit, Ôshima thought about many other animals, like cats or mice, but none seemed to work.

All three men had to narrow down their research: they needed a character whose body would be some sort of weapon, one who

had the capacity to roll into a ball. Two animals finally came to mind: the armadillo, a small mammal from South and Central America with plates of dermal bone that form a protective shell once it rolls into a ball, and the hedgehog, which has stiff hollow hairs that create a spiky barrier when it rolls into a ball for protection. "How did we make a choice between an armadillo and a hedgehog?" Yasuhara still wonders. There were several points for the three of them to consider. First of all, the game's main concept, speed, was a point in the hedgehog's favor: for an adventure based on quickness, what would be more ironic than a supersonic hedgehog? The team liked this paradox. There was also the difference in nature between the two animals. When the armadillo rolls into a ball, it is protecting itself. It uses its body as a shield, not as a weapon. But the hedgehog's spikes were more suited to Naka, Ôshima, and Yasuhara's idea of a hero who was able to attack while jumping.



## Naoto Ôshima remembered one of his old sketches

where you could see,  
in black and white,  
a kind of hedgehog called  
**Mr. Harinezumi.**

### "MISTER NEEDLEMOUSE"

Naoto Ôshima, the designer whose heroes had been selected and then rejected, remembered one of his old sketches where you could see, in black and white, a kind of hedgehog called "Mr. Harinezumi" (Mr. ハリネズミ), which means "hedgehog" (literally, "spiky rodent"). The American translation "Mr. Needlemouse" would remain known only to the more dedicated fans for years, until it was referenced again in 2010 during the reveal of "Project Needlemouse" as *Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode I*.

It was more of a rough sketch, drawn hastily with a pencil, but his colleagues immediately fell in love. Before, when the game's concept did not involve a character able to roll into a ball, the hedgehog's spiky back had no use in the project, and the design was thus rejected. Now, though, Ôshima's sketch was far more suitable. The hedgehog, standing up and seen from the side with its sharp triangular spikes, had a certain look about it; a distinct personality. The game's hero had finally arrived!







Early Sonic designs, from the original sketch to the final sprite image.

Forget Mr. Harinezumi, this spiky character was named Supersonic, and then finally, Sonic. The more striking name was meant to intrigue players... and also, the people in charge at SEGA did not yet know that the rabbit concept had been dropped by the development team! As Ōshima worked on his sketch a bit more, the hedgehog's features became more polished and detailed, while the overall proud and determined appearance remained. He then added sky blue fur, a strong and direct tribute to the company's colors. Finally, SEGA had its mascot, and Sonic's design was nearly finished.

The team still had to integrate him into the prototype game designed for the rabbit, however. In fact, many enemies had to be redrawn. The team worked to reach an agreement on the visual complexity of the environments, especially with regard to the choice of colors. They would have a deciding influence on Sonic's own color: "To tell you the truth, we changed Sonic's color," Yuji Naka said. "During most of the game's creation, the hedgehog was sky blue, a bit like what Naoto Ōshima had used in his first

sketches. But the problem was, in several levels (especially the first one, Green Hill Zone, with the ocean in the background), Sonic was barely visible, to the point that we had to use a darker blue afterward." After that, the character did not need much more work to reach his familiar, classic look.

At SEGA, the hedgehog's personality and fresh, dynamic design rapidly received unanimous support. Yet, at this stage, Sonic Team's masterpiece was still in its infancy and was progressing slowly. In order to speed things up, the three-man team handling the project added four more people to its ranks.





## Think Fast.

C'mon faster. Because here comes Sonic The Hedgehog. He's the fastest critter the world has ever seen, and he's a hedgehog with a major attitude.

Watch him smirk in the face of danger as he blazes his way through hilly pastures, underwater caverns, marble ruins, strange cities and a cybernetic world of enemies in a race to save his buddies.

Sonic's got everything a hedgehog could ever want: tricks, gadgets and speed. So don't blink or you might just miss him. Sonic is sold separately or included when you buy a Sega Genesis 16-bit system.

**SEGA GENESIS**

Leading the 16-bit revolution.



## BEATING MARIO TO THE PUNCH

By early 1990, Mario's popularity was overwhelming. The plumber had invaded the homes of millions of players around the world, and poll results showed that he was more popular than Mickey Mouse among American children. SEGA wanted to conquer that very same American market, so Yuji Naka looked for ways in which SEGA's new mascot could surpass Nintendo's hero. The company could not afford to repeat the same mistakes it had made with Alex Kidd, and what really annoyed Naka was the slowness of Shigeru Miyamoto's character. "To go from point A to point B, it takes Mario 30 seconds," he had calculated. "My wish was to go from one point to the other in about ten seconds at the most, in order to build more energetic gameplay." His analysis was right: *Super Mario Bros.* was indeed designed to be rather slow in accordance with Shigeru Miyamoto's wishes. When he was repeatedly asked to improve the game's speed before its commercial release, the plumber's father instead accelerated the movements of Mario's legs, giving the impression that he was running faster without actually changing his movement speed one bit! "When I was playing Mario, I used to spend most of my time pushing the B button to run," Naka remembered, slightly annoyed. Thus, his hedgehog's default movement speed had to be at least as fast as the plumber's running speed. Naka was therefore

Sonic The Hedgehog, at the very  
beginning,  
had such  
fast scrolling  
that it made you  
sick  
after a few minutes.



free to make a faster game. The programming team ran some tests with the Genesis' tool library since it was specifically designed to facilitate the development of games on this console. Though they had the tools to take care of problems that arose with most other games, *Sonic* was an exception.

The team only needed a few minutes to see the obstacles they were up against, such as flicker problems, slow frame rates, and jerky animation. As soon as the developers increased the hero's moving speed, the animation suffered. Sonic Team really had to get to the root of the problem to improve the game's visuals. As it turned out, Naka took care of it himself! After a few weeks, the talented programmer created a miracle algorithm that allowed the game's animation to retain its fluidity despite the hero's movement speed, which would become one of the project's greatest strengths. At the time, no other character could match the speed of Sonic the Hedgehog. Thanks to Naka's programming, the hero crossed each level in 30 seconds without the animation slowing down. The only task left was to optimize the game's speed to meet the rest of the staff's expectations, even the faint of heart!

Despite the exceptionally fluid scrolling, one small problem still remained. The team realized that the perception of speed was different from one person to another. In fact, some thought the game was too fast, which led to many disagreements within the team. Naka admitted that, at first, the hero moved so fast that it could make your head hurt: "*Sonic The Hedgehog*, at the very beginning, had such fast scrolling that it made you sick after a few minutes. Therefore, we slowed the game down a bit, but we kept a certain pace in the hedgehog's movements." Thus the balance had been restored, and Sonic Team could finally get to work on the levels.

The Mega Drive  
with the  
game *Sonic  
The Hedgehog*.





Green Hill Zone  
was modified and restarted  
over and  
over again,  
and was finally completed after almost  
**8 months**  
of work.

## A CLOSE STUDY OF PINBALL

The story was written. *Sonic The Hedgehog* would be a fast and colorful game, but the hedgehog's surroundings still had to be defined. Hirokazu Yasuhara – the third member to join the team and the man in charge of creating all the levels and their architecture – decided to draw his inspiration from pinball games. To this end, the Japanese creator used everything at his disposal, starting with Yuji Naka's prototype.

Through his technical demo, Naka showed what kind of gameplay he had imagined from the start. The foundation had been laid. The game would be entirely playable with only one button, and Sonic could run, jump, and roll into a ball while rushing toward his enemies. Yasuhara then understood that he had to find the right balance and build levels that were both visually complex and easy to go through. Quickly, he thought about circuits with bumpers, like in pinball games. "We have to admit that it was an easy direction to take with a hedgehog that could roll into a ball," Yasuhara recalled. During the first tests, he also added the loop-de-loops that would later become the series' chief trademark.

But above all, the level designer wanted to unify players from all over the world. That was a real headache, though, since *Sonic The Hedgehog* was to be released on every continent to put an end to Nintendo's domination with Mario. "The Japanese and American audiences are completely different," Yasuhara said. "Players in the West like complex gameplay and instant fun, while we Japanese like it simple. It was from this analysis that I started working on Sonic by developing a game that would be interesting for both countries, (and) not only for hardcore gamers but also for casual gamers."





Though this might have seemed like a straightforward goal, actually achieving it was far more complicated. Many levels were given extra thought, such as the very first one: the famous Green Hill Zone.

This level was remade countless times. It was modified and restarted again and again, and was finally completed after almost eight months of work. That might seem surprising, especially since all the other levels did not cause as much trouble. But Sonic Team wanted to make sure that this first level portrayed their hero in just the right way. For instance, the checkered ground was inspired by renderings from computers capable of generating 3D images, an idea Naka got from Yu Suzuki, who had used this type of technique to give 2D games a 3D aspect when he worked on *Space Harrier*. (source: SEGA Consumer History, Enterbrain, 2002)

Furthermore, the palm trees and other background elements, even though they were in 2D, were drawn as if they were made of polygons. These elements made *Sonic The Hedgehog* technologically superior to all other platform games at the time. In order to get the upper hand on the *Super Mario Bros.* series, the team read through every issue of Famitsu. This popular Japanese video game magazine helped them stay up-to-date on their rival's actions. Nothing was left to chance. "All the characters of the Super Famicom games were our rivals and also our targets. During the development of Sonic, we paid close attention to everything that was done on that console. All the information, all the comments from Famitsu were closely studied so as to avoid any mistakes," Yasuhara said, laughing.





A screenshot from one of the famous "special stages" in *Sonic The Hedgehog*.

Another notable aspect of the game was the special stages. Long before Sonic, Yuji Naka had already designed a program to rotate the screen. "I really wanted to use it for Sonic, so I added it to the mix. And it spun perfectly!" said Naka. "In my eyes, it was in no way inferior to what the Super Famicom could do." The result was stunning; Sonic was trapped in a rotating maze where he attempted to find a hidden gem and escape. With these stages, SEGA challenged Nintendo's technical prowess, and the team managed to create visual effects that were thought to be impossible for the Genesis.

## THE REJECTED SCENARIO

Although the members of Sonic Team were united in their vision of the game they wanted to make, they soon ran into some disagreements with SEGA of America. While Yuji Naka was working on the game's program, Naoto Ôshima was preparing the scenario. As a big fan of pop music, especially Michael Jackson, he first considered a modern story, far from the usual clichés then found in video games. At the time, it was quite common to witness a romantic relationship between an animal-like character and a human; such was the case in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, and many of Tex Avery's cult cartoons. Ôshima's first script, one that very few people know about, was written in a similar vein. When a demo of the game was presented at the Omocha Show in June 1990 without much fuss, Sonic was traversing a very sophisticated first level, with its seven layers of differential scrolling. The game's colors were much darker then, but graphically it already showed hints of the iconic Sonic "look": palm trees, greenery, and general volume. One thing was quite different from the *Sonic The Hedgehog* we know and love today, however: the title screen

showed our hero next to a human girl named Madonna

Indeed, in the first version of the scenario, Ôshima made Sonic the leader of a rock band. And yes, the spiky singer had a girlfriend named Madonna. Her design was inspired by the American pop star of the same name, and the young woman was at the center of a story that, sadly, was never finalized. Instead, a drastic change disrupted the scriptwriter's plans: a certain Tom Kalinske became the head of SEGA of America and categorically refused to associate a strange little blue animal with a human girl in a romantic way. But even more than the character of Madonna, it was the game's overall scenario that Kalinske found problematic. A real battle started between the Japanese team and SEGA of America's business manager at the time, Madeline Schroeder. The latter, backed by Kalinske, went to Japan to set things straight.

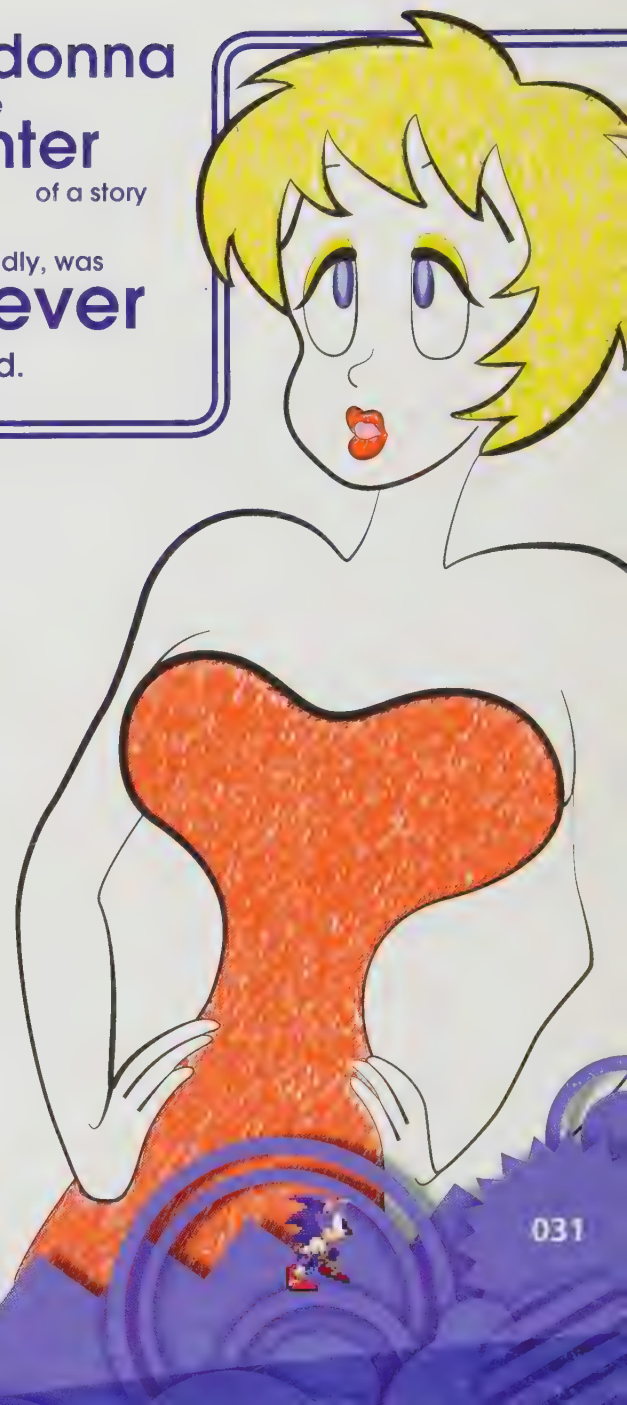
The heads of SEGA of America felt strongly that Sonic should have nothing to do with a woman, let alone one whose design was inspired by an actual American icon. Furthermore, the scenario was deemed to be too similar to Mario's quest to rescue his princess. The hero's rock band was also considered to be an unnecessary element, so it also disappeared from the final script. "I think the scenario imagined by Ôshima-san was too Japanese. SEGA of America wanted a more American universe, and I can assure you that the changes made by the U.S. business team were hated by Sonic Team," said executive producer Shinobu Toyoda.

Differences aside, Sonic Team wanted the mascot to be popular in the United States as well, and therefore, they heeded the U.S. branch's concerns. SEGA of America's rejection of the scenario was final, and it nearly put an end to this new hero's existence, even if



the project was already nearly complete. Kalinske admitted years later, "The Japanese, unbeknownst to us, created the character of Sonic the Hedgehog. In America, Sonic looked ridiculous because a hedgehog is a small animal, and on top of that, it was blue. We thought it was a stupid idea, but undeniably, the game was really good and the character made history." In the end, Sonic Team realized their own mistakes as well. Naka admitted that he struggled to accept the scenario change at first, but in the end he agreed it was beneficial. "To be honest, I hated the decision of the American division and said to myself that the players were losing something," said Naka. "But with some insight, this change made by SEGA of America was one of the reasons why *Sonic The Hedgehog* was such a big success." Once Madonna and rock 'n roll were out, Sonic was given a new purpose: to save the animals that had been turned into robots by Doctor Robotnik/Eggman. In the end, SEGA had a hero, a villain, and an easy-to-grasp environmentalist theme. Finally, in order to improve the gameplay, the "Chaos Emeralds" were implemented. They were precious stones that the hedgehog had to find in order for the player to see the game's true ending. This was a way to make the levels longer and the game – which was then near completion – deeper. Only its trademark music was missing.

**Madonna**  
was at the  
**center**  
of a story  
that,  
sadly, was  
**never**  
finalized.



The adjective  
**"sonic"**  
 means  
**"of or relating to  
 sound".**

## DREAMS COME TRUE

A video game's soundtrack is often as important as its graphics and gameplay. Fortunately, one of SEGA's heads, who had formerly worked at a music company, thought exactly the same thing and suggested that the game's soundtrack be made by professionals (source: *Mega Drive Taizen*, Ohtabooks, 2004). After all, the adjective "sonic" means "of or relating to sound"! To that end, SEGA asked a famous Japanese band to create the game's music. Dreams Come True, which then consisted of three members, was started in 1988 under the name *Cha-Cha & Audrey's Project*, a title that was quickly dropped while *Sonic The Hedgehog* was still a work in progress. Masato Nakamura, the band's leader, songwriter, and guitar player, was asked to do the game's soundtrack. SEGA was counting on his fame and talent to make the game's music really shine.

On the left, Sonic promotes  
 the Japanese band  
*Dreams Come True*, who  
 created the game's  
 soundtrack.





For his part, Nakamura never expected *Dreams Come True* to become a cult success in Japan over the years. "I had just started my career with *Dreams Come True* when I was asked if I wanted to have a go at making the soundtrack for the new Sonic. I was more than surprised! But what made me want to take on this challenge was that everyone at SEGA gave me their support by saying that the game would be better than Mario. At the time, Mario was on top of the video gaming world. It was really incredible. I was really impressed by the passion that transpired through the whole development team and their desire to do better. So I did my best to help with this project," Nakamura said. Although the young man remembered playing games like *Space Invaders* and thought he would be limited to working with beeps and other simplistic sounds, he knew what kind of music he wanted to make.

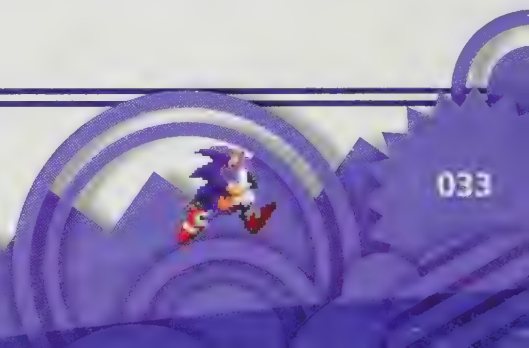
Nakamura had to adapt to the Genesis' sound chip and get used to creating music on a computer. Nothing was impossible, though; in fact, it was quite the opposite back then. "At the beginning of the 1990s, there was a real attraction to computer music. It was the perfect timing to create Sonic's soundtrack, and we put our heart into it. Art, entertainment, and computers have become commonplace in our everyday lives, and this is where Sonic was born," recalled Nakamura. Made with an Atari microphone, the creation of the soundtrack was not easy. "The most difficult part

was the number of sounds that could be played simultaneously. At the time, I could only use four at once. The use of each sound sequence was a real dilemma! Besides these four changing sounds, I could only use a bass, two chords, and one melody. That's all! Without any knowledge of music and computers, it is impossible to do this kind of work," said Nakamura. Little by little, though, he managed to create several melodies that received unanimous praise at SEGA. But most impressive was that he was working on his album with *Dreams Come True* at the same time, switching from one job to the next in the same day.

In the age of the Internet, it is difficult to imagine the pains Nakamura had to take to pass the lovely melodies of *Sonic The Hedgehog* on to the team. "Today, the soundtrack of a game can be sent with an email, but before, we had to record the soundtrack on a tape! The sound technician recorded the melody by adapting it to the console's sound capabilities and sent the chip back to me so I could check if everything worked properly," he told us, before talking about one final, amusing obstacle. "When the music was finalized, I was very happy and I wanted to discover my own creations in the game. But I was so bad at it that I wanted to ask SEGA to create an invincibility cheat for my cartridge," he laughingly admitted. As the story goes, it was Miwa Yoshida, *Dreams Come True*'s lead singer and also a skillful player, who allowed Nakamura to listen to his work in the game! ■

## The etymology of Sonic

The name of the famous hedgehog comes from the adjective "sonic", which means "of or relating to sound". It is a remote descendant of the Latin word "sonos" ("sound"), which comes from the Greek "tonos" ("tone"). But in English, the adjective "sonic" mostly evokes the idea of speed. This is exemplified in the expressions "sonic boom" and, in particular, "sonic barrier". This is why the hedgehog's original name was Supersonic. It was a perfect name for the new mascot, but ironically, also a name that made a clear reference to Super Nintendo games. After all, where would most players look for Supersonic, if not between *Super Tennis*, *Super Castlevania*, *Super Bomberman*, and *Super Mario* himself? So it was shortened to Sonic — bolder, more dynamic, and... quicker!



# A NEW FACE IN THE MAGAZINES

Even if Sonic was nowhere to be seen at the beginning of 1990, SEGA had a plan to unleash him at just the right moment and create a media buzz in anticipation of the game's release in mid-1991. SEGA created a massive marketing campaign to prepare for the unveiling of *Sonic The Hedgehog* during the Tokyo Toy Show. However, things did not go as planned...

It was June 1990 at the Makuhari Messe convention center in Chiba. Sonic made his first appearance in a technical demo presented at the Tokyo Toy Show. In order to cause a stir, the anonymous character was shown alongside Madonna, who was then at the high point of her career. The lucky few who were invited to the private presentation got to see the first draft of the Green Hill Zone level, which featured then-revolutionary ultra fast, seven-layer differential scrolling.





**Sonic**  
made his  
**first**  
appearance in a  
**technical demo**  
presented at the  
**Tokyo Toy Show**  
in June **1990.**



Reconstitution of the seven layers of scrolling in the very first version of Green Hill Zone at the Tokyo Toy Show in June 1990

Quite a sight to behold! Yet despite this technical feat, the graphics were a bit dull and the demo failed to garner a lot of attention from the press. Then came a "long" period of radio silence following a request from SEGA of America, who wanted to keep an ace up its sleeve in order to stage a counterattack against the Super Nintendo at the 1991 Consumer Electronics Show (CES). At the time, the game was only in its infancy – just two months into development. Furthermore, the theme of animals turned into robots had not yet been established. Instead there were strange monsters, such as characters with crooked fingers and bat wings, and Dr. Eggman clad in a bee-style costume.

In October 1990, a magazine printed for the members of the SEGA Player Enjoy Club (SPEC) published a strange statement: "Project Sonic is moving forward. We have information: it's a game cartridge scheduled for this spring..." The message provided no

further information. A handful of Japanese readers then wondered what this mysterious "Project Sonic" was. Fortunately for them, the answer was quickly revealed. The following month, the new issue of the SPEC magazine provided the dates for Dreams Come True's "Wonder 3" concert. On the same page, the three members of the band were drawn along with a cute little blue animal at the center, reaching out to the reader. Who was he? The following page said, "He is here at last!" This was one of the first known appearances of SEGA's new mascot. In a mock interview, the hedgehog character spoke to the readers in a very casual manner. He said he was from Christmas Island, a world completely different from ours. He was an adventurer and spent his free time playing in a rock band.



Though the hero had finally been introduced, players still knew very little about his game. The only information available was that it was an action game scheduled to appear on a console. The original article included a mysterious reference to Chuck Yeager, the first pilot to break the sound barrier. It stirred up the readers' curiosity, but then, once again, radio silence followed...

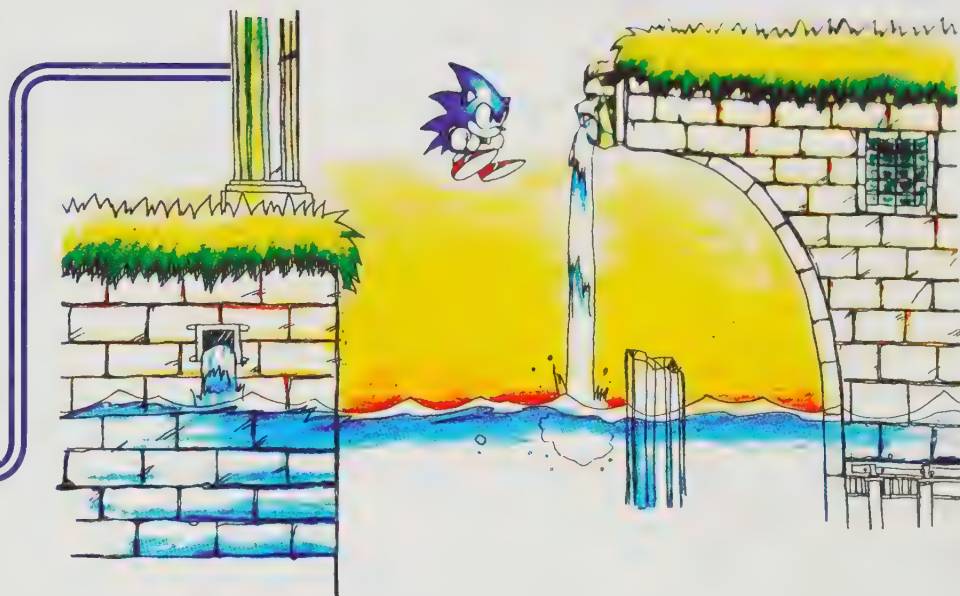
The marketing teams then realized Sonic had potential. SEGA had put so much hope into this title that — just for fun — Al Nilsen, who was then the head of marketing at SEGA of America, stated that Sonic was not just a hedgehog, but THE hedgehog, and that "the" should be capitalized accordingly. Humorously, he explained to his colleagues that it was Sonic's middle name, and registered it as such in the United States. *Sonic The Hedgehog* then became the game's official name. But beyond this little anecdote, SEGA of America still had one main obsession: countering Nintendo, who was still the video game industry's frontrunner. But the Kyoto-based company had plans of its own; it was scheduled to release its new 16-bit console during the summer of 1991. With the blue hedgehog, however, SEGA knew it had a trump card up its sleeve, and the company suddenly realized that it was in its best interests to keep this card hidden for as long as possible. Instead of revealing the title too soon, SEGA wanted to wait for the right time. The next big industry event in the United States would take place in January, and the whole world was waiting for the Western unveiling of Nintendo's new console. It was the ideal opportunity to steal the show with a spectacular reveal of the iconic blue hedgehog, especially since at the very last minute, Nintendo did not present its long-awaited 16-bit console at the event, but instead put the focus on the next productions for the NES and the Game Boy. This decision benefited SEGA's new mascot.

Pages taken from the SEGA Player Enjoy Club (SPEC) magazine, announcing the dates for Dreams Come True's "Wonder 3" concert.





The animation on the  
**Genesis**  
game was  
faster,  
the backgrounds were more  
**stylish,**  
and the whole  
game was more  
**colorful.**



## FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCES

*Sonic The Hedgehog* was presented to the world for the first time at the 43rd International Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, which took place from January 9th to 14th, 1991. While the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) did not exist yet, CES – an event dedicated to high-tech products – was mostly about video games at the time. That year, Nintendo took up no less than a third of the whole area available for the event. But even with a meager one-third of just one of CES' three warehouses – that is to say, one-ninth of the whole venue – SEGA made its presence known, and most importantly, had a huge element of surprise. *Sonic The Hedgehog* ended up being the most impressive game at the exhibition, and the company successfully spread the word that it was probably the greatest platform game ever made. SEGA did not hesitate to display screenshots of its key project alongside *Super Mario World*, which Nintendo had just revealed at the event. Everybody agreed on the richness of Miyamoto's new game, but the plumber's 16-bit adventure did not look as good on-screen as Sonic Team's bold

challenger. The animation on the Genesis game was faster, the backgrounds were more stylish, and the whole game was more colorful – and, of course, the settings on all the TVs at SEGA's CES booth were tweaked to make *Sonic The Hedgehog* look its best. At the end of the day, the game won the CES Award for innovation, given by the Electronic Industries Association.

At the same time, SEGA became a sponsor for Dreams Come True's tour throughout Japan. It started in Urayasu, in the Chiba prefecture, on November 7th, 1990 and lasted for three months. Sonic, who was still unknown to most of the Japanese public, was displayed on the band's huge tour bus – his first official public appearance outside of a video game exhibition. SEGA continued to make an impact by handing out Sonic leaflets at the concerts. The leaflets bore a mysterious message: "Kawai yatsu ni wa toge ga aru," which, roughly translated, means "Even the cutest ones can sting." One could possibly see this as a crafty swipe at Nintendo!





Sonic's very first appearance in the racing game *Rad Mobile*, released in April 1991 in arcades.

Sonic made his arcade debut in April 1991 with *Rad Mobile*, a racing game. He was neither a driver nor an onlooker; instead, he was on a key ring hanging on the rear view mirror! The explanation? "When Sonic became known as SEGA's mascot, another development team within the company asked us if they could include him in one of their titles. We immediately accepted, thinking it would be fun if Sonic appeared in all of SEGA's productions," Yuji Naka remembers. This was no coincidence; it showed the mascot's popularity within the company, the teams' dedication to their games, and the employees' collective support for the company's ambitions. Meanwhile, SEGA's public relations campaign was also working. Month after month, exhibition after exhibition; 1991 was the year that Sonic first became one of the most famous video game characters of all time – all before his game was even released.

## THE DAY OF GLORY

In spring of 1991, SEGA began a very aggressive advertising campaign against Nintendo: the famous "SEGA does what Nintendo't." This message suddenly made Nintendo's forthcoming Super NES and *Super Mario World* – which hadn't even been released yet in North America – seem old and far less impressive than what SEGA could offer. For the first time in history, SEGA – a once-humble challenger in the video game industry – was throwing down the gauntlet and challenging Nintendo on its own terms.

*Sonic The Hedgehog* finally saw the light of day on the Genesis, the

American equivalent of the Mega Drive, on June 23rd, 1991. The fact that Japan had to wait until July 26th – more than a month later – to play SEGA's masterpiece served as proof that the game was designed first and foremost for Western audiences. To put things in context, you have to remember that Nintendo owned more than 70% of the video game market at the time; a dominating majority. Sonic was a risky bet for SEGA, and some predicted it would fail to even put a chink in Nintendo's armor. But in order to counter Mario, SEGA of America set up many PR strategies as soon as the game was launched. Demo stands were installed in many major cities throughout the country so that everyone could get some hands-on time with the new game. Commercials featuring an actor dressed as Sonic, comparing the Genesis and the Super Nintendo, flooded TV screens. Sonic's speed and attitude – both cool and fashionable – were emphasized. It only took SEGA a few weeks to grab an extra 5% of market share from Nintendo. But for the Genesis manufacturer, that was not enough.

Despite Sonic's success, SEGA of America president Tom Kalinske didn't feel that the character was being exploited to its full potential. For the 40-year-old executive, the game bundled with the Genesis at the time, *Altered Beast*, was not attracting enough buyers. He immediately hopped a plane to Japan to talk about this problem with Hayao Nakayama, the big boss at SEGA of Japan. Kalinske's goal was clear: convince the people in charge to bundle *Sonic The Hedgehog* with the Genesis. When the decisive moment arrived, Mr. Nakayama became furious, saying, "You're insane! We're making money with our games, and you want our best title ever released to be given away with the console?" As Shinobu Toyoda, the game's



executive producer, recalled, "Nakayama-san got up from his chair, screaming, and kicked his chair very hard. Very upset, he walked to the door to go out. And right when he was about to leave, he suddenly turned to Tom Kalinske and said, 'If you think it's the solution to beat Nintendo, then do it!' And he slammed the door." At that moment, Kalinske was convinced that his career at SEGA had just ended. But it hadn't. Back in the United States, he set up his exceptional promotional offer, and it ended up being a huge success.

In 1991, consumers got a free copy of *Sonic The Hedgehog* with every purchase of a Genesis from July 1st to August 31st. Thanks

to this bold move, which was meant to counter the upcoming August launch of the Super Nintendo, Kalinske managed to sell almost 15 million Genesis consoles. While the technically inferior NES kept collecting dust on store shelves, Sonic became a real icon for America's youth. In Europe, Nintendo practically gave SEGA a free run during the holiday shopping period, with the 8-bit *Super Mario Bros. 3* as the blue hedgehog's only opponent. *Super Mario Bros. 3* was fantastic, of course, but it suffered graphically compared to SEGA's title, looking almost archaic by comparison. In November 1991, SEGA of Japan took charge of distribution, which had previously been handled by Virgin Mastertronic. It was then that SEGA France was born.

On the right, an advertisement using the famous slogan, "Genesis does what Nintendo doesn't."

Below, the Japanese Mega Drive bundle including *Sonic The Hedgehog*.

**Sonic** was proof  
that you could  
take on a giant  
with a console that included a  
new generation of  
**technology.**

Some figures: four million copies of *Sonic The Hedgehog* sold throughout the world, and the game scored ratings comparable to the best Nintendo games — 9/9/9/9 in Electronic Gaming Monthly (EGM) and 92% in Mean Machines. Sonic was also featured on the cover of many video game magazines. The blue hedgehog was a hot topic in many a schoolyard conversation and set the North American and European markets ablaze. The buzz surrounding the blue tornado had gone global. In just a few months, SEGA had nearly caught up to Nintendo, with a 65% share of the market for next-generation consoles in North America, while the Super Nintendo console release had been delayed. And Sonic's story was just beginning. From this point on, all the Japanese executives stopped questioning Tom Kalinske's choices. This success was all his, but let us not forget the three men behind this project...

## A HAPPY TRIO

In just a few weeks, Yuji Naka and Sonic Team's designers had been given a reason to celebrate: the first Sonic game had seduced a massive amount of players around the world! At the time, very few people had predicted the tremendous impact the character would have. Thanks to its new idol, SEGA had gained momentum against its rivals. Hayao Nakayama could rejoice, and the valiant developers could congratulate each other for their work.





Having been called in to help take the lead on the project, Yuji Naka used all his experience and talent to successfully manage the conception of SEGA's mascot. Looking back on that time, he willingly admits, "Sonic is like a son to me. I'm very proud of what we've accomplished with him. I want him to keep growing and make me happy. To tell you the truth, I didn't think (the game) would become such a huge success. I really think that publicity and quality are the main reasons for (its) success." But Naka was not the only one to be rewarded for his accomplishments.

Sonic's designer, Naoto Ôshima, could not believe it either. His character had become a real star, one that every teenager in the world adored. Thanks to an aggressive advertising campaign, it was impossible to miss the blue hedgehog. "When Sonic beat Mario, I was really happy," Ôshima recalls. "I remember going to Universal Studios and everybody was asking for my autograph. I was really shocked, and I realized how famous the character had become." His little protégé, created over just a three-month period (from concept to team approval), had left an everlasting impression on the entertainment world.

*Sonic The Hedgehog* was undoubtedly a huge success, and a lot of this was due to its striking level designs. Thanks to the power of the Genesis, Hirokazu Yasuhara was free to create a large number of original and diverse levels and backgrounds. He even said so himself: "Sonic was proof that you could take on a giant like Nintendo with a console that included a new generation of technology." No matter where he went, people were fascinated by the blue hedgehog's adventures. The game was a real masterpiece – and this was only Sonic Team's first attempt! It seemed as if all was going smoothly, but an unexpected event would soon shake things up... ■



Zone 3

# THE GOLDEN AGE

Such success called for another effort, so SEGA started production on a second, even more ambitious title. Of course, Yuji Naka was asked to take charge of this new project. But...

Yuji Naka, SEGA's hero? Not quite. The young programmer got quite an earful instead because he did not meet the production schedule for *Sonic The Hedgehog*. His superiors kept ranting and raving, "This game will never go on sale." After all of Sonic's development difficulties and despite the game's commercial success, Naka had grown tired and wanted to work on something else. Around that time, Mark Cerny, the creator of *Marble Madness* and a former colleague of Naka's who had worked with him on the SEGA Mark III, invited him to come work at SEGA Technical Institute (STI). It was the company's new American division based in Redwood City, California, not too far from Palo Alto. Naka seemed interested...





Thanks to his charisma, the Japanese programmer managed to convince level designer Hirokazu Yasuhara to come with him to the United States. Both pillars of Sonic Team settled in Uncle Sam's territory to work on the sequel to *Sonic The Hedgehog*. Cerny will forever remember that moment: "In September 1991, four months after the release of *Sonic The Hedgehog* in North America, I brought together two of three emblematic members of Sonic Team at the headquarters of SEGA Technical Institute. We were all ready to work on this new project, so I asked the marketing division: 'Do you want a new Sonic game?'" The answer should have been obvious, yet Cerny got a surprising response: "Strangely enough they told us, and I can assure you I'm not joking, that it was way too soon. Therefore, in the meantime, we worked on another concept, and in November, right when we were about to start developing this new title, the marketing division came to see us and said we needed to make the sequel, and as fast as possible. We had just lost two months on an 11-month development schedule... we only had nine left." Thankfully, this unfortunate hitch had no effect on the team's motivation, and the creation of *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* thus started.

Compared to SEGA's other studios, STI had almost complete freedom. In order to complete this project, the studio called in other members from Sonic Team. This cultural mix helped the less experienced American developers learn from their Japanese mentors. Peter Morawiec, a programmer at STI, clearly remembers the cultural challenges the team had to face: "There was the language barrier and some had trouble blending in, but most of my Japanese colleagues were very friendly. From what I understand, Sonic claimed all of Yuji Naka's attention, and he was a perfectionist. Western programmers had trouble with the credo of their Japanese counterparts, as well as their way of coding. Moreover, the Japanese developers had a different work ethic; many of them were used to spending their nights at work, sleeping on mattresses next to their desks. After *Sonic 2*, Yuji Naka made the decision to split the teams. The experience would have been more useful if we'd had more (development) time," said Cerny, "But the schedule was so tight that no one could blame him."

Both pillars of

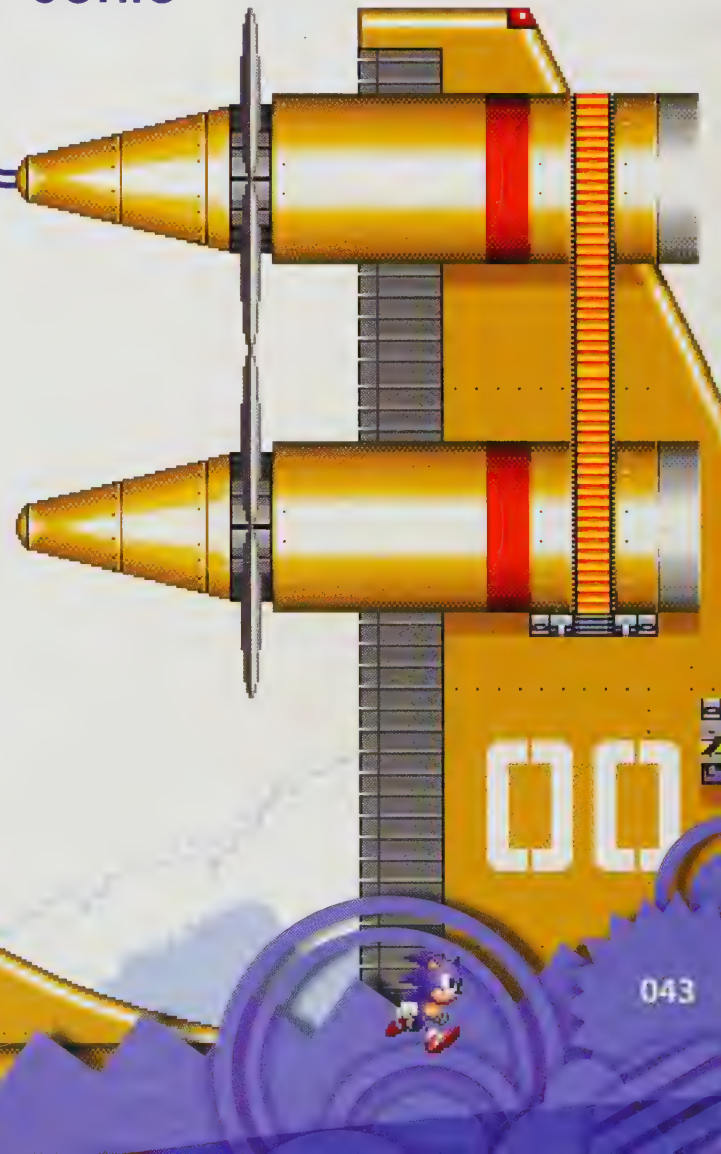
## Sonic Team

settled in

Uncle Sam's territory

to work on the sequel to

**Sonic** The Hedgehog.



## Sonic CD

had to go beyond the hedgehog's  
limits  
while offering a creation  
worthy  
of this new  
optical device.

## SONIC CD AND THE TIME PARADOXES

While *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* was in development in the United States, SEGA's Japanese branch did not sit around waiting. They started working on a brand new Sonic title in order to promote the Genesis' new add-on device. While the Japanese company had always been known for its intense games, let us not forget that SEGA was first and foremost a renowned manufacturer. At the beginning of the 1990s, the computer industry saw the arrival of the first CD – or compact disc – players. As a new storage device, CDs were light, efficient, and modern, which led to the belief that they were the future. Meanwhile SEGA's CEO, Hayao Nakayama, wanted to boost the sales of his 16-bit console and further challenge its rival, the Super Nintendo. Engineers at SEGA therefore designed the SEGA CD which, as its name suggests, was a CD player add-on for the Genesis. It was released in 1991 in Japan, a few months after the first Sonic game, but the hedgehog would not make his appearance on this hybrid machine until 1993.

At that time, compact discs were a dream invention. Aside from





their futuristic look, their storage capacity and laser technology made them very popular. During the initial months following its release, the SEGA CD (known as the Mega CD outside of North America) sold rather well. So development on a Sonic title for the add-on began, and the game was quickly named *Sonic CD*. Directed by Naoto Ōshima, this episode had to go beyond the hedgehog's limits while offering a creation worthy of this new optical device. Created entirely by a Japanese team, the title was first designed as an improved version of *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*, which Yuji Naka was supervising in the U.S. But Ōshima was not a big fan of CD-based games, as he thought their loading times were too long and that the medium was not suitable for young children. His opinion changed over time, however. "At first, we intended to use most of the elements from *Sonic 2* and add new things with the possibilities offered by the CD (medium). But the more development progressed, the more different it became from *Sonic 2*, and we finally decided to make it a completely new title," Ōshima confirms. The team designed new levels, a new character (Amy Rose), and an original scenario that introduced time travel. So basically, as soon as it came out, *Sonic The Hedgehog* already had two different sequels in the works. SEGA planned to release *Sonic CD* first, followed by *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*.

But *Sonic CD*'s development took more time than expected, mostly because of the specifics of the CD format. Inspired by *Back to the Future*, Ōshima wanted Sonic to "jump" from one time period to another once he had reached a certain speed. To his utmost disappointment, however, the idea did not work out because of load time issues, and the team had to rethink the game. In the end, ironically, the game was pushed back to September 1993 — almost a year after *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*'s release. For its part, although *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*'s creation was no easy task, the game performed incredibly well upon release and more than fulfilled SEGA's hopes and expectations.

The developers at SEGA Technical Institute knew that their title was eagerly awaited by players, and they did not want to disappoint, even if time was short. Nine months to make such a huge, high-profile game was quite a tall order! After all, to create a similar title — albeit a slightly more complicated one — SEGA of Japan had taken twice the time.



## SONIC 2: TWO PLAYERS AND A WORLDWIDE RELEASE

Even though it was designed by a team with people from different backgrounds, *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* was built on the same foundations as its predecessor, but with one big difference: the appearance of a fox with two tails named Miles "Tails" Prower. During the development of the first Sonic, Naoto Ôshima was not the only character designer who had considered a hedgehog for the main character. This story isn't very well-known, but a certain Yasushi Yamaguchi had also thought about and even designed a hedgehog (without ever consulting Ôshima-san), but his drawing had not been kept. So when another internal contest was launched to give birth to a new protagonist for *Sonic 2*, Yamaguchi did not hesitate.

To convince the heads of Sonic Team, the designer used a mythical creature from Japanese tales and legends called a "kitsune". A kitsune is a giant fox that can have anywhere from one to nine tails, depending on its power. Since Sonic came off as some kind of rebel hero, Yamaguchi decided to give him a sidekick with two tails, as a sign of the newcomer's youth and lack of experience. This fox — which was not a squirrel, like many people thought at the time — was named Miles Prower, an obvious pun on "miles per hour". This time, the Japanese designer was finally rewarded: Miles was chosen for the sequel. But Yamaguchi's joy was quickly quelled when he learned that his creation had been renamed "Tails". Frustrated but determined, Yamaguchi put the name Miles Prower under all the illustrations he had drawn. Finally, Miles "Tails" Prower became the fox's official name.





The simultaneous display of a new protagonist created trouble for the development team. Yuji Naka, a pioneer in the art of ultra-fast graphics, had to go even further: "For *Sonic 1*, speed was the most important element of the game. We had to completely rewrite the program in *Sonic 2* in order to move both characters simultaneously in their environment. We needed to focus on speed, but also on the two-player gameplay to introduce Tails," Naka remembers. Instead of having Tails act just like Sonic, the team gave the fox the ability to fly for short periods of time through the use of his tails, which could spin like a helicopter.

Just like in *Sonic The Hedgehog*, the goal was to put an end to Dr. Robotnik's evil plans. In the one-player part of the game, Tails – controlled by artificial intelligence – followed Sonic throughout his adventures. One of Naka's requests for this sequel, was to include a

One of  
**Yuji Naka's**  
requests for this sequel  
was to **include a**  
**2-player mode.**

two-player mode. "In *Sonic 1*, we had wanted to add a two-player mode. During development, we split the screen in two and we made it possible to have two Sonics running at the same time," Naka recalled. But huge problems with the animation led the team to give up on the idea. In *Sonic 2*, however, the team was able to manage this technical feat.

By the time *Sonic 2*'s highly anticipated worldwide release rolled around on November 21, 1992, anticipation for the blue hedgehog and his sidekick, Tails, had reached a fever pitch. The levels were longer than in the first game, and the new, unique special stages made quite an impression. *Sonic 2* sold like hot cakes during its first weeks on the market, and it was all players were talking about. Even with *Super Mario Kart* and the console versions of *Street Fighter II* offering stiff competition, *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* became the favorite game of the year. Aware of the hedgehog's potential, SEGA's American marketing department did everything in its power to have the company's hot new commodity appear everywhere – TV, radio, magazines, stores... everywhere but the kitchen sink! In just five days, the game sold about 500,000 units in North America alone. At that time, such sales for a video game were unheard of! And it didn't stop there. By the time the game was taken off the shelves at the end of 1992, it had received unanimous critical acclaim from both players and the media, and had become regarded as one of the best Sonic games ever made, if not the best. In the end, six million copies were sold.





Goodies started invading shops:  
bed covers, cups,  
**comic books,** posters,  
toys, plushies, shoes,  
clothes... Sonic was  
**everywhere.**

## 1993: SONIC. WORLD ICON

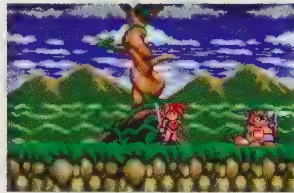
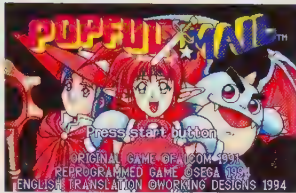
In just a few weeks, Sonic became a friend to gamers around the world. Seduced by the success of *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*, many companies signed exploitation contracts with SEGA in order to promote their products through the blue hedgehog. McDonald's, the world's biggest fast food chain, sensed a change in the players' minds and started offering Sonic products, after a similar campaign with Mario three years earlier. In France, a contract was signed between SEGA France and the cable channel Canal + to display a little Sonic animation before each advertisement spot. Sonic was taking the world by storm; he was even displayed at huge events like the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York in 1993. Sonic goodies started invading shops: bedspreads, cups, comic books, posters, toys, plushies, shoes, clothes... Sonic was everywhere!

A contract was signed between SEGA and the F1 Championship's sponsor, Frank Williams. At the time, there were two popular F1 drivers: Frenchman Alain Prost, who was loved by Japanese audiences, and Britain's Damon Hill, who replaced the former world champion Nigel Mansell. During the '93 season, all Williams F1 cars (built by car manufacturer Renault) displayed the hedgehog, and their drivers wore white gloves and red shoes. The link between Sonic the supersonic hedgehog and the ultra-fast race cars seemed obvious. Best of all, Alain Prost and Damon Hill were both dominating their competition; the former had won every race but three. Of those three, two were won by Damon Hill and the other by their biggest rival, Ayrton Senna. These victories allowed Williams to become one of the main contenders in the Formula One championship and indirectly helped tie Sonic and SEGA's image to strong concepts: technology, speed, and victory. Yuji Naka, a Formula One fanatic, could not have been happier. In 1993, Sonic was definitely on a winning streak.





## 1992: Sister Sonic, an unknown project



In the shadows of *Sonic 2*, *Sonic 3*, and *Sonic & Knuckles*, one particular title never saw the light of day. *Sister Sonic* was announced in the second half of 1992, along with four other titles scheduled for release on the SEGA CD during the creation of the studio SEGA Falcom. This title was actually a port of *Popful Mail*, an action RPG previously released for Japanese computers. SEGA Falcom thought about adapting the game with Sonic characters and releasing it during the summer of 1993. The project was quickly dropped, however, after Falcom fans voiced their disapproval. No in-game artwork was ever released.

The blue hedgehog beat out his competitors in a poll taken by young Americans in 1993. In 1990, Mario was the first character to beat Mickey Mouse in popularity polls, but the hedgehog beat Walt Disney's famous mouse too. Sonic became a major part of the TV scene in 1993, with not one but two animated TV shows. The first one was "Sonic The Hedgehog", an American cartoon that was broadcast until 1995. In France, the hedgehog's fans could watch a French-American production called "The Adventures of Sonic the Hedgehog" ("Les Aventures de Sonic the Hedgehog"), which was funnier and more colorful and cartoonish. It debuted in 1995.

The character and the series eventually garnered a passionate fanbase, as illustrated by a controversy that started in November 1993. It was during the release of *Sonic CD* – the famous transitional episode that takes place between *Sonic 1* and *2* – in the United States, which was finally launching after a six-month delay. American players found out at this time that the soundtrack had been completely changed and that it was very different from the music in the Japanese and European versions of *Sonic CD*, released in September and October respectively. "I heard about the controversy on the game's music in the American version. Everybody tried to figure out which one was the best, but I think it's just nonsense. There were two completely different musical approaches. If I remember correctly, the people in charge of marketing at SEGA of America wanted something richer and more complex, with a song that could help them promote the game. The fact that we added feminine voices worked quite well. In *Sonic CD*, there were new characters including Amy Rose. I thought it would be a good idea to mention her through these feminine voices," said Spencer Nilsen, the American version's lead composer.

Below, two original hand-painted cels of Sonic from the DIC television series, *The Adventures of Sonic the Hedgehog*.



## Sonic 2

was about the

2-player mode,  
so we said to ourselves that

## Sonic 3

would be about

## 3D...

The new American *Sonic CD* soundtrack, completed in record time, delivered the famous song "Sonic Boom", well-known among all the hedgehog's fans. On the other hand, the Japanese version contained two songs by Keiko Utoku, a Japanese singer who was part of the band Mi-Ke and who launched her solo career with these two songs written for *Sonic CD*. Neither version had the "better" music, but at the end of 1993, the hedgehog had become such a big video game star that some diehard fans wanted to enjoy both versions of *Sonic CD* and their accompanying soundtrack.

Cashing in on this huge craze, SEGA did not think for one second that their new mascot's popularity could ever wane. The company had already approached Yuji Naka and asked him to develop a third title. In fact, along with the other Sonic games on the Master System and Game Gear, this title was already going to be the sixth platform game involving Sonic since his beginnings in 1991.





## SONIC 3. THE BEGINNINGS OF 3D

After the undisputable success of *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*, Yuji Naka was asked by Japanese SEGA executives to come back to Tokyo at the beginning of 1993. The Japanese programmer thought hard about it and realized that, after a year away, he felt homesick and wanted to be back in his native land. But the indisputable condition for his return was to allow him to work on *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* with his own team, the original Sonic Team.

Convinced that he was in the best environment possible to make an even more impressive game than *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*, Naka thought about the different aspects of this sequel to come. "I really wanted to create a great game, unforgettable... and it was terrifying. We thought we should flesh out the scenario to explore Sonic's universe, and this decision made the project even bigger than it (already) was," the man in charge of the series would later admit. But this ambition was not limited to just the scenario; in fact, technology was at the center of the team's desires.

As Naka confessed in June 2011 at Joypolis (a famous arcade venue in Tokyo), "*Sonic 2* was about the two-player mode, so we said to ourselves that *Sonic 3* would be about 3D." Quite a lofty goal Sonic Team wanted to create a three-dimensional

game with an isometric view. The team relied on advanced programming techniques, and in particular on a new chip that was still in development, which could enhance the Genesis' power, especially in terms of displaying three-dimensional graphics. It was the SEGA Virtua Processor, or SVP, which would later be used for the Genesis port of *Virtua Racing*. Programmers worked hard in order to create a prototype and spent several months mastering 3D modeling, but because of the delays with the chip and with the deadline for *Sonic 3* fast approaching, a decision was made to go back to traditional 2D visuals. However, the programmers did not entirely give up on the isometric 3D prototype.

Just like with the first two Sonic games, a design contest was launched within the company, but this time it was exclusive to SEGA Technical Institute. The goal of this competition was simple: to create a third character who would debut in *Sonic 3*! After a month, nearly a hundred sketches were studied by the American executives. They took notice of a drawing made by a certain Takashi Yuda. His creation was an echidna named Knuckles. Compared to Sonic, Knuckles had backward spikes and drew his appeal from his strength: "Sonic symbolizes speed, while Knuckles symbolizes power and strength. He is able to break the things that get in his way, to climb walls and even to fly. We had to implement all these elements to create this new character," the game developers explained. At first, Knuckles was not considered by his creator to be an echidna but rather a mole with spikes. Rather naive, Knuckles was fooled by Doctor Robotnik, who led him to believe that Sonic and Tails wanted to steal the Master Emerald. But Knuckles later realized his mistake and joined forces with the hedgehog and the fox.

A glimpse of the bonus stages in *Sonic 3*.  
Their 3D effects can also be seen in the  
characters on the title screen of  
*Sonic & Knuckles*.



The campaign with McDonald's  
was **scheduled for**  
**40 million meals,**  
which meant one  
**toy** for every American child.

*Sonic & Knuckles* marked Takashi Iizuka's arrival on Sonic Team. He worked as a game designer and became the series' producer after a few years. However, *Sonic & Knuckles* was still directed by the two top historical members of Sonic Team: Yuji Naka and Hirokazu Yasuhara.

## ONE GAME. TWO HEROES. THREE POSSIBILITIES

During development, the team realized how huge the project was; however, time was short. SEGA had partnered with McDonald's to have Sonic dolls in all Happy Meals starting on February 2, 1994. The campaign was scheduled for 40 million meals, which meant one toy for every American child on average. The campaign was huge, but it gave the team no breathing room.

Photograph of  
a McDonald's  
box (from the  
*Sonic Adventure*  
campaign), with the  
Sonic toys given with  
each meal for the  
release of *Sonic 3* in  
1994.





*Sonic 3* was turning out to be a huge game, but unfortunately, the production cost of such an impressive cartridge was a problem. As a result, SEGA decided to split the game into two different parts: *Sonic 3* and *Sonic & Knuckles*. Now the team had some extra time to complete the latter, and they also had the opportunity to make the project more profitable by selling not one, but two cartridges. Even better, by inserting *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* or *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* into the *Sonic & Knuckles* cartridge, it was possible to play both titles as the echidna. Since Knuckles played differently than Sonic and Tails, this feature provided an opportunity to rediscover these titles. However, these new games were not as successful as *Sonic 2*.

In February 1994, *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* was released in the American and European markets. The Japanese had to wait until May for the hedgehog's new adventure. Sonic Team thought it would be more appropriate to sell both games (*Sonic 3* and *Sonic & Knuckles*) on one cartridge for the Japanese market. After all, the McDonald's ad campaign was only for the United States, so they did not have the same time constraints for the Japanese release. The team even planned on releasing both titles on an ambitious 24-megabyte cartridge. But in the end, thanks to cost and time problems and the desire to give Japanese players the choice between playing *Sonic & Knuckles* with *Sonic 2* or its sequel, the third episode was released in the same manner as in the other territories a few months later.

Though 1.8 million copies were sold, *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* did not sell as well as its predecessor. *Sonic & Knuckles* came out eight months later and sold rather well worldwide, but the low figures in Japan made SEGA realize that the players were looking somewhere else. It was the end of an era for the hedgehog. It was time to ramp things up. A new generation was coming, which not only meant new games, but more importantly, the next wave of consoles. ■

*Sonic 2* and *Sonic 3* could be "locked on" to *Sonic & Knuckles* to unlock various features.



# THE THIRD DIMENSION



First with the Saturn and then with the Dreamcast, Sonic's developers got a taste of the new generation of video games. It was a huge challenge for the series to maintain the spirit of the 2D titles while ushering in the new age of 3D.

SEGA was the first to strike in the console war following the 16-bit era. Convinced by their new machine's potential and by their fans' support, Hayao Nakayama could not imagine the terrible scenario that was about to unfold. He was anxious to attend a huge exhibition and thought about the impact SEGA's impending announcement of the Saturn would have on the public. The Saturn was to be a real monster in terms of 2D graphics, but also an advanced platform based on Model 1 technology. Model 1 was the best 3D graphics engine at the time and had launched amid great fanfare with the racing title *Virtua Racing* (1992). But suddenly, a major new competitor appeared and literally drowned SEGA's hopes: Sony. Without warning, the inventor of the Walkman unveiled a new console that was far more impressive than the Saturn because its graphics capabilities were twice as powerful as Model 1's. The PlayStation made quite a debut, and SEGA was forced to change its plans in the middle of November 1993, with only one year left before the release of this new machine. Furious at this situation, Nakayama called his engineers and requested that the Saturn's components be modified. Hideki Sato – who was in charge of the project – and his Away Team composed of 27 engineers did what they could and managed to save the day by adding two Hitachi SH-2 processors, which were supposed to work together. Unfortunately, this new architecture made Saturn game development more difficult. About this, Yu Suzuki reportedly said, "I think there is barely one programmer out of a hundred who would have enough experience to use the Saturn's capabilities to their fullest." Even worse, the console's development kits were not quite ready. On November 22, 1994, the Saturn was released



in Japan with a cult title: *Virtua Fighter*, a 3D fighting game that made headlines with its release in arcades in 1993. Yet because of unexploited potential and, in turn, smaller sales figures, the Saturn progressively lost ground to its now historic rival, the PlayStation. In 1997, the battle had already been lost in Europe and the United States. Only the Japanese market managed to resist Sony's invasion, thanks to games designed specifically for Japanese audiences and an effective marketing campaign featuring the legendary Sega Sanshiro. "You must play the SEGA Saturn" he said in their popular commercials, and at least in Japan, they certainly did.

For Yuji Naka, after many years of making Sonic games, the Saturn came at the right time to change horizons. It was also why he decided to change his lifestyle by coming back to Japan after having completed *Sonic 2*. Realizing that the tide was turning in the U.S. (at the time, there was tension between the Japanese and American employees at SEGA Technical Institute), he decided to come back to his native country and, after completion of *Sonic &*

*Knuckles*, started working on a new title with a different atmosphere: *NiGHTS into Dreams*. This game let you play as a purple jester who is able to fly. Immersed in a dream world, the title was divided into several acts in which the player needed to collect orbs to defeat the master of nightmares. Inspired by Cirque du Soleil, *NiGHTS* was quite original and made a lasting impression on many players. Filled with beautiful graphics, fantastic gameplay, and even a Sonic cameo in a limited edition called "*Christmas NiGHTS*", the game received much critical acclaim. It was followed by *Burning Rangers*, a 3D action game that puts players in the shoes of a futuristic firefighter. But like any creator, Naka could not resist going back to his first love, and soon began the creation of a new Sonic game.

A photograph of the European version of the Saturn with three of the main SEGA games that used the machine's 3D capabilities: *Virtua Fighter* (1995), *NiGHTS into Dreams* (1996), and *Burning Rangers* (1998).

After many years  
of making Sonic games,  
the **Saturn**  
came at the right time  
to change  
**horizons.**





A screenshot from a special stage in the Saturn version of *Sonic 3D Blast*, made entirely in 3D.

## WHEN 3D GOT CONFUSING

After *Sonic & Knuckles*, Yuji Naka and his team started work on future SEGA projects that didn't involve the hedgehog. But Sonic had always been present in the Japanese giant's catalog.

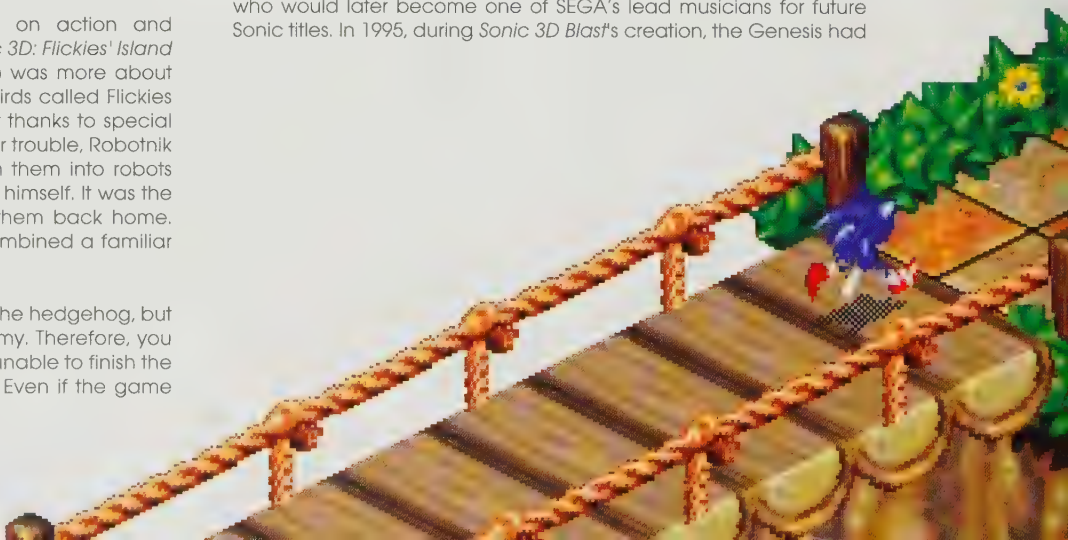
Because it wanted to exploit other unexplored facets of the hedgehog, SEGA of Japan started working on a new Sonic title with an isometric 3D view. In order to successfully manage this project, its creation was assigned to British developer Traveller's Tales, known for the quality of its games (*Puggsy* (1993), *Mickey Mania* (1994)).

While Sonic's previous games had focused on action and platforming, the new *Sonic 3D Blast* (called *Sonic 3D: Flickies' Island* and simply *Sonic 3D* outside of North America) was more about exploration. The game's scenario was typical: birds called Flickies lived on Flicky Island and were able to teleport thanks to special rings called "Dimension Rings". Always looking for trouble, Robotnik decided to capture them in order to transform them into robots and claim the power of the Dimension Rings for himself. It was the player's role to save the little birds and send them back home. Therefore, the game's main draw was that it combined a familiar scenario with an all-new kind of gameplay.

Once they were saved, Flickies lined up behind the hedgehog, but they also scattered when he was hit by an enemy. Therefore, you had to catch them again or else you would be unable to finish the levels, which were composed of several floors. Even if the game

was a bit easy in the beginning, things got much more complicated later on. Indeed, Flickies behaved differently depending on their type, making it more difficult to catch them. Furthermore, the enemies gradually became tougher and tougher, and this was all in addition to the fact that you had to get used to moving in an isometric 3D environment.

*Sonic 3D Blast* was developed for both the Genesis and SEGA's latest console, the Saturn, at the same time. In order to exploit the possibilities offered by both machines to their fullest, each version received its own soundtrack prepared by a different composer. Thus, on the 16-bit console, the music was made by Jun Senoue, who would later become one of SEGA's lead musicians for future Sonic titles. In 1995, during *Sonic 3D Blast*'s creation, the Genesis had





been on the market for quite some time, so both programmers and musicians knew how to get the best out of the console. Thanks to his talent and experience, Jun Senoue, along with his colleagues, made rhythmical tunes that would become a selling point for the Genesis version and that would also return in a future Sonic game: *Sonic Adventure*. The Saturn version's soundtrack was created by Richard Jacques, a British musician who had been under contract with SEGA Europe since 1994. The result was brilliant; the Saturn's disc-based format allowed the artist to do everything he wanted, largely through the use of real instruments.

Graphically, the game was much more beautiful on the Saturn, with more refined colors. But the most striking difference was in the special stages. For these stages, the Genesis version of *Sonic 3D Blast* used a clever zooming process with the camera placed up in the air, and the aim was to catch as many rings as possible. On the Saturn, the developers created an environment worthy of the console's power; this version's special stages were a fully 3D adaptation of the ones in *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*. We should also mention that the Saturn version of *Sonic 3D Blast* was ported to the PC.

## Sonic 3D Blast

was more about  
exploration.





## ANOTHER CANCELED PROJECT

After *Sonic The Hedgehog Spinball* (Genesis, 1993), a game in which Sonic became a pinball, the SEGA Technical Institute team wanted to create a new 16-bit title based on the *Sonic* TV series.

Unfortunately, the team's request, first made by Peter Morawiec, was denied. After several years of good and faithful service, the Genesis was on the decline (from a marketing standpoint) and new machines like the 32X and the Saturn were set to launch. But the team forged ahead with their vision. At first, they had hoped it would be a title for the 32X (a cartridge-based add-on for the Genesis that allowed the display of 3D elements). The game was renamed *Sonic Mars* in the end (in reference to "SEGA Mars", the 32X's code name), and STI was put in charge of the project: "When development started, Sonic Team was busy putting the finishing touches on *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* for the Mega Drive. Therefore, the project was given to STI," said lead musician and artistic director Christian Senn.

The new **32-bit**  
console had to have,  
as a commercial strategy,  
**a new**  
**Sonic game.**



On the left, from top to bottom, some screenshots from the different Sonic games developed by STI that were used for the development of *Sonic X-Treme*: *Sonic-16* (Genesis), an untitled game for the Genesis, and *Sonic Mars* (32X).

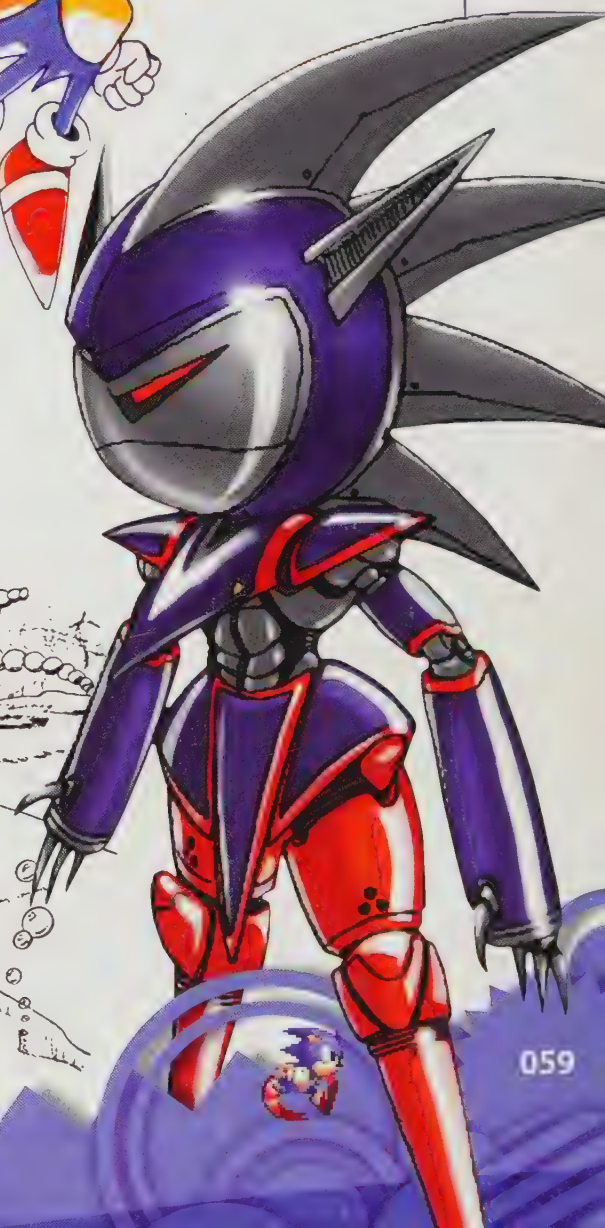
Above, artwork for the character Tiara Boobowski, who was to be included alongside Sonic in *Sonic X-Treme*.



However, the small team, which included designer/producer Michael Kosaka, programmer Ofer Alon, and game designer Chris Coffin, quickly encountered technical problems since the 32X's hardware was still in development. The short demo shown to Tom Kalinske (president of SEGA of America from 1990 to 1996) and Shinobu Toyoda (Sonic Team) was far from impressive. Both men shared their concerns about the game's outdated design, which paled in comparison to the technical innovation of Nintendo's *Donkey Kong Country* (Super NES, 1994).

In the meantime, the Saturn's arrival in Japan put an end to the discussion; the new 32-bit console had to have, as a commercial strategy, a new Sonic game. The 32X project was thus abandoned. "We, ourselves, weren't completely convinced by the 32X's hardware. We had to face several technical difficulties during development. So much so that it was decided after a few weeks that we would make the game for the Saturn. The executives were convinced that this 32-bit platform, enhanced by CD technology, would be more suitable for our ambitions. Especially since the announcement of a new Sonic entirely in 3D was, on a commercial level, an undeniable asset for the console's future," Senn told us. The *Sonic Mars* project was then given a new life as *Sonic X-Treme*.

Artwork made  
for *Sonic Mars*  
and *Sonic*  
*X-Treme*



## CONSTANT TENSION

One of Sonic's fathers, Yuji Naka, has always been protective of his creation. He did not like the fact that other teams were using his character, and the first attempts with *Sonic Mars* were not changing his mind. "Yuji Naka saw the demo of *Sonic Mars* without saying a word and then shook his head and wished us 'good luck'," Christian Senn remembers. "Apparently, he found our project too ambitious considering the platform's capabilities. We wanted to make a full 3D game and I think this idea scared him. Why? Because he dreaded the idea that his own creation could be completely altered. The 2D Sonic relied on simple, efficient, and fun gameplay. And he was convinced that using 3D might generate a whole lot of problems that would force the developers to rethink some of the game's mechanics and, in the end, alter the original spirit of the series."

Nevertheless, Naka was not the only person to make decisions and he was unable to give us his version of the story. So the development of *Sonic X-Treme* began on the Saturn. Bernie Stolar was a talented businessman who became president of SEGA of America after he left an executive position at Sony Computer Entertainment America. He had made the PlayStation a real commercial success and he wanted to overshadow Nintendo and their new 64-bit console. SEGA of America's new president thus demanded that *Sonic X-Treme* be ready for release by Christmas of 1996. He asked Roger Hector, who was in charge of STI at the time, to assemble a team of experienced developers as soon as possible to give life to the project. For months, a team of programmers worked day and night to achieve this colossal feat, even if it meant sleeping in their offices. But all people have limits, and soon, the dream had to give way to the harsh reality: the schedule could not be met. A solution had to be found, and quick!

Screenshot from  
the game  
*NiGHTS into Dreams*.

In order to release the  
**game** on time,  
Sonic  
**X-Treme's**  
developers  
asked for the **3D** engine  
of **NiGHTS** into Dreams...







A glimpse of the three worlds that would have been included in *Sonic X-Treme* (from bottom to top: Jade Gully, Crystal Frost, and Red Sands).

## THE CANNING OF THE PROJECT

In order to release the game on time, *Sonic X-Treme*'s developers asked for the 3D engine of *NiGHTS into Dreams*. This was Yuji Naka's future game, which was under development at the same time by Sonic Team in Japan. After long negotiations, Bernie Stolar was able to save *Sonic X-Treme*'s developers a lot of precious time, and they were able to create a first test level within a few days. But there was one person the SEGA executives did not talk to about this: Naka, who had created the 3D engine in question. When he learned that his work was being used by SEGA Technical Institute, his blood boiled and he requested that his 3D engine be given back to him.

The fact that STI lost their access to this technology also meant the end of development on *Sonic X-Treme*. After three years working on this project, the team was reassigned to other games, starting with *Sonic 3D Blast*. It wouldn't be until the next generation of hardware that the world would see the hedgehog in a true platform/action game in real-time 3D...



## SONIC KART

In 1997, Sonic was exploring new game genres with the arrival of *Sonic R*. This racing game focused on the hedgehog and his friends' speed, with some of them using vehicles.

Over at Nintendo, Mario had become quite the expert kart racer. One of the company's most successful franchises to date, the *Mario Kart* series was a bitter pill to swallow for SEGA. Even though their mascot Sonic was known for his speed, the mustachioed plumber had beaten him to the checkered flag. This was unacceptable to the Japanese giant, and they decided to strike back. SEGA wanted to bring Sonic back into the spotlight and once again approached Traveller's Tales, the creators of *Sonic 3D Blast*, in order to create a racing game in the Sonic universe.

## A STRANGE COINCIDENCE

When the head of Traveller's Tales got the call from SEGA's director, he was rather shocked. Indeed, his team had been working on a Saturn-bound Formula One game for several months, and many elements (including the 3D engine) had already been designed. After meeting with his employees, he decided to use the work they had already done to make the title that SEGA was asking for. Nevertheless, in order to work under the best possible conditions, he asked for more freedom than they'd had on *Sonic 3D Blast*. Because the schedule was tight, the studio was given free rein to make a game that could dethrone *Mario Kart*. In just a few days, the Formula One project had turned into *Sonic R* ("R" for "Racing"). Everything happens in a heartbeat in the world of video games! In order to successfully manage this task, Traveller's Tales and SEGA kept in close touch. Sonic Team sent over all the documents the British company needed, including track layouts, the new character designs, etc.

A screenshot from the Resort Island level in the racing game Sonic R. The scene shows a sandy beach with a blue body of water in the background. In the foreground, several characters are visible: a red fox-like character (Tails) on the left, a red character (Knuckles) in the center, and a blue character (Sonic) on the right. They are all wearing racing gear and are positioned near a red kart. The background features a large, rocky cliff and a small green hill with a palm tree.

Screenshot from the  
Resort Island level in the  
racing game *Sonic R*.



## AN ASTOUNDING CREATION

For about six months, Traveller's Tales' programmers transferred the world of Formula One racing into a Sonic game. The realistic environments were replaced by fun, colorful settings. Thanks to everything they had learned during the creation of *Sonic 3D Blast* and the quality of the documents provided by Sonic Team, development was moving forward smoothly. However, because of the obviously tight development schedule, the British developers had to limit themselves to just five tracks, including a hidden one. Rather than offering set, closed tracks to the players, they created circuits with many shortcuts. As Jon Burton, the game's main programmer, explained, "Sonic Team wanted a title that was a mix between a racing game and a platformer. We developed a 3D engine capable of displaying open environments, which allowed the player to move freely. Sonic was usually featured in platform games, which is why we added secret areas and exploration phases to abide traditions. This is the reason we implemented a map to guide the player. Each track draws its inspiration from the old Sonic levels, like Green Hill Zone, Casino Night (Zone), Chemical Plant (Zone), et cetera."

But most of the development time was spent on creating state-of-the-art graphics, and in that respect, *Sonic R* was a true marvel! It was during the game's development – between 1996 and 1997 – that the Nintendo 64 appeared on the market. Inspired by the programming techniques employed with this machine (such as the use of a kind of fog called "Pixie Dust"), *Sonic R*'s creators unveiled the result of their work, which surpassed the public's expectations. During the summer of 1997, at the big E3 exhibition in Los Angeles, the Traveller's Tales title made quite an impression and journalists anxiously awaited the game.

**Sonic Team**  
wanted a title that was  
a **mix** between  
a **racing** game  
and a **platformer**.



**Sonic Jam** was an opportunity to rediscover the best titles in the **Sonic** series.

## DANCING UNDER THE TROPICS

It just so happens that *Sonic R* also had one of the best soundtracks on the Saturn, if you liked dance music and frenzied tunes. Composed by the talented Richard Jacques, the soundtrack included songs sung by British artist T.J. Davis, who worked with famous English musician Gary Numan. As was often the case, these songs had their own little stories, as Jacques explained: "I paid a visit to SEGA of Japan and had a meeting with Yuji Naka and the members of Sonic Team. We talked about the project, and in particular the music. Yuji Naka asked me if I could write a song that could be used as the main theme for the E3 exhibition. So I created a song named "Super Sonic Racing", which was used for the demo during the event. After I had written this song, Yuji Naka contacted me to make the game's soundtrack, and asked me to add voices. To tell you the truth, it was one of the most difficult works of my career because the lyrics had to really mean something. T.J. Davis has an incredibly powerful voice and she was very motivated by the project. We recorded the singing part in about seven days at the Metropolis studio in London."



Drawings featured in the artwork gallery in *Sonic Jam*.





A screenshot from the "Sonic World" 3D environment in the game *Sonic Jam* (Saturn, 1997).

## MIXED REACTIONS

*Sonic R* was released on the Saturn at the end of 1997, before it was given a second life on the PC. Though SEGA fanatics were happy about the title thanks to its soundtrack and the game's overall quality, many players criticized its poor playability. Because of the speed and inertia, it was indeed difficult to properly control the characters who did not use vehicles – that is to say, almost all of them. Only Amy and Robotnik drove vehicles, while everyone else ran or flew. Furthermore, there were no items to use during races. Robotnik was the only one who could launch missiles, and this flaw was quite detrimental to *Sonic R*, even though it was still a pleasant experience on the Saturn.

## THE FIRST COMPILATION

In April 1997, SEGA started the "Project Sonic" initiative in an attempt to revitalize the hedgehog's career, while also giving him an updated image worthy of his beginnings. *Sonic Jam* was the first game to be made under this new initiative.

With the blue hedgehog's reputation fading, the people in charge at SEGA of Japan wanted to give his image a new boost. *Sonic Jam* provided an opportunity for fans to rediscover the best titles in the Sonic series. The compilation included the first three Sonic games, along with *Sonic & Knuckles*. But the most interesting part of *Sonic Jam*, from a historical point of view, was "Sonic World".

## AN EARLY SONIC ADVENTURE


In *Sonic Jam*, there was a 3D environment called "Sonic World" in which you accessed extras like artwork, music, or videos of the hedgehog's adventures. The player could control Sonic in this open world, while collecting tips for the games included in the compilation. At first, this 3D world was not meant to be included, as Takashi Iizuka, one of Sonic Team's core members, explains. "In fact, we were working on a new 3D Sonic game, called *Sonic Adventure*. However, the limited capabilities of the Saturn were a problem, and the 'Dreamcast' was about to be completed. Therefore, we stopped development and added what had already been done as a bonus in *Sonic Jam*."

## TOWARD A NEW STEP

*Sonic Jam* was released in 1997, marking the hedgehog's final appearance on the Saturn. Sonic Team's work on "Sonic World" was thankfully not in vain, and went on to be used in a game that would eventually claim near unanimous praise. This game was actually a part of a title that had first been created for the Saturn: *Sonic Adventure*. Having moved the game's development over to the Dreamcast, Sonic Team could count on new hardware that showed tremendous capabilities for its time. ■

# DREAMCAST.

## THE RETURN OF THE SPEEDY BLUE HEDGEHOG



While Sony's PlayStation and Nintendo's N64 continued their historic battle, SEGA suddenly fired a new salvo into the technology race. The Dreamcast console launched on November 27, 1998 in Japan, on September 9, 1999 in North America, and on October 14, 1999 in Europe.

With its sleek form and white hue, the Dreamcast was a dream machine for players. Despite some heroic resistance in Japan, the Saturn could not stop Sony's invasion in the end. The PlayStation had made a name for itself and Nintendo had lost ground, despite critical success for the Nintendo 64. Times had changed and SEGA knew it had to react to avoid being left behind. But in a post-Saturn 1997, the Haneda company's finances were not looking good, and SEGA knew that another failure would be fatal.



## THE GIANT'S AWAKENING

In 1996, SEGA's president, Hayao Nakayama, started thinking about his next move. As Yuji Naka explained, "I was very involved in the Dreamcast project. After the completion of *NiGHTS*, I started working on the console's architecture and gave some ideas. There were many elements that I suggested that were kept in the machine's final design." In order to help him with this task, Nakayama called his friend Shoichiro Irimajiri, who had formerly worked for General Motors, to offer him the position of Vice President. Their combined experience proved beneficial to the creation of SEGA's next console, even if its beginnings were a little chaotic. Because he did not know about the conflicts between SEGA's Japanese and American branches, Irimajiri called on the talents of a man who had worked at IBM: Tatsuo Yamamoto. The latter joined SEGA's Western team to design a new console. However, in Japan, this decision was not well received. This was why Hideki Sato, designer of the Genesis and the Saturn, decided to take part and work on the future machine as well. After a complicated development process thanks to relentless competition between SEGA of Japan and SEGA of America, the console finally emerged from the company's Japanese laboratories and was called the Dreamcast. It was launched on November 27, 1998 in Japan and was far more powerful than the other consoles at the time, as Naka pointed out during a presentation in August 1998: "The high resolution offered by the Dreamcast is not available on any other console. Furthermore, the internal storage capacity is very high, much higher than on the Saturn and the PlayStation. The

main processor is very powerful and offers many perspectives. The combination of these elements makes the machine very attractive for developers and designers."

## FROM THE SATURN TO THE DREAMCAST

Remember, after *Sonic & Knuckles*' release, Yuji Naka began working on new, non-Sonic projects: "After creating Sonic games on the Mega Drive, I wanted to design new universes. This is why I worked on *NiGHTS*. It was at the end of its development that I heard about the Dreamcast project. I was convinced it could help Sonic Team create the best Sonic ever." At the time, Sonic Team was providing Traveller's Tales with the documents required for making *Sonic R* and working on several attempts at a new *Sonic* for the Saturn. One of these attempts was a game with an RPG-like story in the hedgehog's universe, with more characters, a deeper scenario, and huge environments. Entitled *Sonic Adventure*, the project was halted in order to be ported to the Dreamcast, while the work that had already been done was implemented into *Sonic Jam*. The development of *Sonic Adventure* thus began in July 1997, with about 20 people: seven programmers, ten artists, and three game designers. And already, time was very short...



## INSPIRATIONAL JOURNEYS

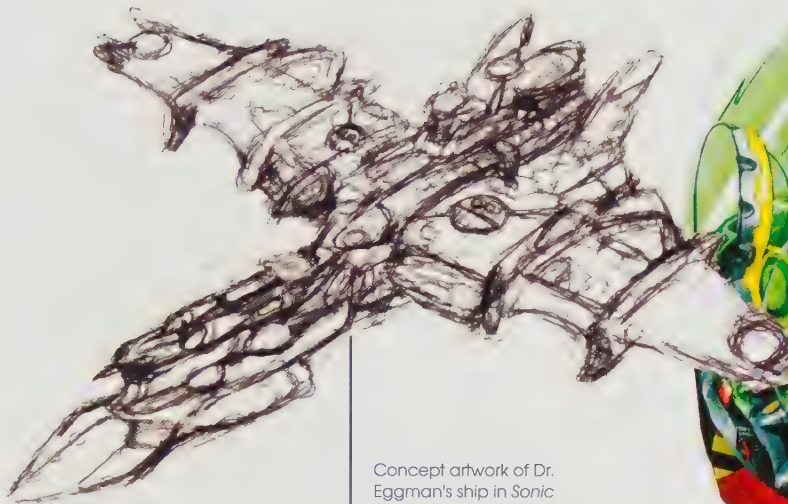
To get inspiration for *Sonic Adventure*, several key members of Sonic Team visited magnificent locations in South America. "With the arrival of the Dreamcast, the technical gap was so huge that we wanted to make an impact by offering more realistic and more impressive environments," explained Takashi Iizuka, the game's director. "We really wanted to create the settings we had imagined during the design phase. And among these drawings, there was a jungle, but none of us had even seen one. Therefore, we decided to fly to South America in order to see these landscapes with our own eyes. We visited temples, ruins, the jungle, and many other places. The photos we took really helped us design *Sonic Adventure*." The Mesoamerican landscapes inspired the team to create many in-game locations such as the Mystic Ruins and various other areas. In *Sonic Adventure*, the hedgehog could move around freely in open environments, which led to unique stages modeled after magnificent real-world locations like the Amazon rainforest. Inspired by their travels in Peru, the team created a new echidna character named Tikal. She was named after a Mayan city which, translated, means "bread" or "Place of Voices". She wears traditional Mayan attire, as well. The team was also inspired to create an unexpected new level for the game. "When visiting the different sites in Peru, we discovered something we could not imagine," recalled Iizuka. "People were sliding on the sand dunes on a board! We were really impressed and we decided to use this in the game. We thought Tails was the most suitable character, and we designed this level with him surfing on sand."

A screenshot of the echidna temple in the heart of the Mystic Ruins forest in *Sonic Adventure*.

We visited temples, ruins, the jungle,  
and many other places.

The photos  
we took really helped us  
design  
*Sonic Adventure*.





Concept artwork of Dr. Eggman's ship in *Sonic Adventure*, the Egg Carrier.



## SHORT BUT INTENSE DEVELOPMENT

As surprising as it may sound, *Sonic Adventure* was completed in ten months and had a team of 60 people by the end of development. There were many challenges presented by the game, including the rendering of speed. "Usually, in 3D games, the camera follows the character from the back," said Takashi Iizuka. "Unfortunately, this did not allow us to translate the feeling of speed in the 2D Sonic games. After some research, we decided to develop a more dynamic camera system showing Sonic from many angles, in order to enhance his moving speed in the environments." SEGA really wanted the game to be ready by Christmas, even if it meant improving it afterward – and this is exactly what happened. On December 23, 1998, Japanese audiences received a quality, graphically astounding title, but there were still many bugs and problems with camera angles. To resolve this problem, a dozen members of Sonic Team (including Iizuka) flew to the United States to create a perfect version for the American and European releases. This new version, which required several months of work, was later released in Japan under the name *Sonic Adventure International*.

*Sonic Adventure* was introduced to the press and the general public between May and August 1998. During a huge conference at the Tokyo International Forum, Yuji Naka (who made quite an entrance with smoke and lasers) and Sonic Team unveiled a few impressive elements from the game, like the killer whale in the first level and the "sand boarding" sequence. For Naka, the event was as intense as it was fascinating. "Since Sonic is a very fast character, we designed vast environments. I really gave it my all to reach such a final result," said Naka. "But besides the size of the levels, we really tried to make everything coherent. I think it was one of the biggest difficulties, finding a balance between the graphics and the diversity of the universe of *Sonic Adventure*. For Mario or any slower character, I wouldn't need to create such huge worlds. Besides, at first, these levels were designed for Sonic and afterward, I decided to add other heroes, who were more focused





A screenshot from a Chao Garden in *Sonic Adventure* (Dreamcast, 1999).

on exploration. It really is one of the title's biggest assets."

Indeed, Sonic's first 3D title was impressive on many fronts. Even though players could progress through the levels very quickly, the game was quite long with its six characters and their intermingling scenarios; in this way, Adventure Mode was really fascinating. The soundtrack was created with care by Jun Senoue, the game's main composer. "Out of my whole career, *Sonic Adventure* and *Sonic Adventure 2* remain very important games for me," said Senoue. "With *Sonic Adventure*, it was the first time that I worked as a sound director and I completely changed the series' usual musical style." Today, *Sonic Adventure* is still the best-selling Dreamcast game of all time, with almost two and a half million copies sold.

## A NEW IDEA

The Dreamcast was the first console in history to offer a memory card with a screen. This accessory gave the developers a new idea for *Sonic Adventure*.

Takashi Iizuka, the director of *Sonic Adventure*, imagined creatures that could be transferred from the memory unit to the console and vice versa. He then talked to Yuji Naka about it, who gave his approval (both men had been working together for many years). In a just few weeks, Iizuka's team produced several sketches and gave the concept some more thought.

## STRANGE CHARACTERS

Convinced by the potential of his idea, Takashi Iizuka went back to see Yuji Naka. The latter was really impressed by the different designs his colleague showed him. Without hesitation, he gave the idea his approval and asked Iizuka to implement this "Chao World" into *Sonic Adventure*. But who were these soon-to-be famous Chao characters? They were cute little singing creatures, similar in concept to Bandai's virtual animal, the Tamagotchi.

## THE INTEGRATION OF THE CHAO WORLD

To be clear, *Sonic Adventure* was designed from the start with the "Chao World" idea in mind. This was the reason that the creature Robotnik used in his scheme was a giant, mutated Chao. Takashi Iizuka wanted to introduce a charismatic creature that could resist technology and who would be the protector of its people. During the game's story, Sonic fought Robotnik and a disturbed Chao named Chaos, who transformed every time he ate a Chaos Emerald. Since *Sonic Adventure* offered an open world, it was possible to discover areas dedicated to the little creatures called "Chao Gardens". The Chao were adorable and evolved according to the players' actions. Each Chao had their own personality and acted in unique and surprising ways. *Sonic Adventure* was an intense game, and the Chao Gardens allowed the player to take a breather.



## CHAO INTERACTIONS ANYTIME. ANYWHERE

Players could send their Chao from the game to their memory unit. The Visual Memory Unit (VMU) had a screen, so it was possible to interact with the creatures anywhere, any time. *Sonic Adventure* allowed Takashi Iizuka to improve this artificial life system, which had originally been invented for an old Saturn game: *NIGHTS into Dreams*. Iizuka went even further by designing an evolution system. During the game, the player could collect small animals from various stages. By giving them to their Chao, the latter could evolve and learn new skills, depending on the type of animals given to them. *Sonic Adventure 2* improved the concept further, allowing players to create even more unique types of Chao — and find hidden ones, like a custom Tails Chao that could be unlocked through another Sonic Team game called *Phantasy Star Online*. Thanks to their popularity, the Chao would continue to show up in both Sonic and other SEGA games for years to come.

Players could send  
**their Chao**  
from the **game**  
to their **memory unit.**



# HISTORY



## SONIC ADVENTURE 2'S CHALLENGE

One of the Dreamcast's flagship titles, *Sonic Adventure* managed to reunite the hedgehog's fans. His relative absence during the Saturn era had truly been felt, and SEGA decided to produce a sequel.

When he left for the United States with several team members, Takashi Iizuka did not expect to be in charge of a sequel so quickly. Sonic Team USA was established, and they worked for six months on the Western localization of *Sonic Adventure*. As surprising as it may seem, the development of *Sonic Adventure 2* began soon afterward and paralleled the way *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* was designed by the American team at SEGA Technical Institute, after the first title had come from Japan.

## BACK TO BASICS

*Sonic Adventure* was a fascinating but tiring enterprise. Putting the hedgehog in a 3D universe caused many problems for the development team. As always, they had to run an astronomical number of tests to make it work. Working step-by-step made the developers realize the importance of the camera's position. In order to give the right sensation of speed, it had to follow the character while offering incredible viewing angles. It was from this observation that development on *Sonic Adventure 2* began. After taking the lead of Sonic Team USA, Takashi Iizuka's (whose first Sonic project was *Sonic The Hedgehog 3*) first order of business was to make *Sonic Adventure*'s structure more dynamic by going back to a basic principle: action! At the risk of disappointing the fans of

In ***Sonic Adventure 2***,  
the player discovered the  
**story** both through  
the **heroes...**



the first episode, he decided to get rid of the open environment to focus on a succession of levels. "For *Sonic Adventure*, the basis of the game was to tie the unrelenting action of the Mega Drive's first episodes to the many new elements of the scenario. For *Sonic Adventure 2*, we wanted to go back to the series' roots," recalled Iizuka. "We focused more on the game's action rather than its story. In the first one, there were several action phases combined with exploration, looking for items, et cetera. In *Sonic Adventure 2*, we separated these sequences according to each character. For instance, Sonic is involved in levels that rely on pure speed, Tails is used for shooting phases, while Knuckles is used for exploration phases." In order to break out even further from the universe in *Sonic Adventure*, the director split the game into two parts. The player thus got to experience the story not only from the heroes' perspective, but the villains' as well. In the end there were six playable characters, including Rouge the Bat and Sonic's dark counterpart, Shadow the Hedgehog, who used hover shoes to move as quickly as his rival.


## AN AMERICAN AURA

Just like *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* had been a technical showpiece for the Genesis that made good use of the system's capabilities, Takashi Iizuka wanted everyone who bought *Sonic Adventure 2* to be blown away. "We really wanted the game to run at 60 frames per second, and we programmed the environment so that you could truly feel the impression of speed," Iizuka said. "Of the other preproduction tests we ran, one of the most important was the one with the two-player mode. Furthermore, in *Sonic Adventure 2*, Sonic did not only run; he could slide on a ramp and hit an obstacle by rolling into a ball. We wanted to have some kind of rhythm within the action."

... and the  
**villains.**







A screenshot from  
the boarding  
sequence in the  
streets of City  
Escape from *Sonic  
Adventure 2*.

Of all the changes made for *Sonic Adventure 2*, it was the environments that would see the biggest, most notable updates. The Sonic universe really was not the same anymore. "Since Sonic Team USA is located near San Francisco and its Bay Area, we discovered some magnificent locations. We decided to insert the beauty of these settings into our game," said Iizuka. "Of course, the world in *Sonic Adventure 2* is imaginary, but we drew our inspiration from what we saw in the city every day. For the other levels, since we were in the United States, we had time to visit some famous tourist sites like Yosemite National Park. Most of the game's elements were imagined in the USA, and we wanted the game to have an American atmosphere."

We wanted the game to have  
an **American  
atmosphere.**





A screenshot from the game *Sonic Shuffle* (Dreamcast, 2001).

For many, *Sonic Adventure 2* is still one of the hedgehog's most beloved adventures, even if some preferred the first game and its decidedly more Japanese design. Released in Europe and Japan on June 23, 2001, this sequel celebrated the hedgehog's ten-year anniversary. Perhaps it was also a step toward ten more years of success?

## PARTY WITH FRIENDS

The Dreamcast had popularized the concept of playing console games online. By taking advantage of its mascot's success and charisma, SEGA wanted to convince the general public to join the online revolution.

During the development of *Sonic Adventure 2*, SEGA decided to approach Hudson Soft, a Japanese company well-known for creating cult-hit games such as *Bomberman*. With their established expertise in multiplayer games, Hudson Soft started working alongside the Japanese Sonic Team on a party game called *Sonic Square*. This particular game was designed to allow four players to have fun and play at the same time. At the start of development, SEGA was openly confident in this new title.

## ONLINE FUN

During the creation of the game, the team settled on the name *Sonic Shuffle*. The team's aim was to bring experienced players and beginners together through online play. From the start, the

team decided to use a cel shading (also known as "toon shading") technique for the graphics, which meant using thicker lines for the characters and backgrounds to imitate the style of cartoons. The cute and colorful designs provided perky atmospheres for the player. The team created several uniquely themed stages, and players could only progress by picking cards. *Sonic Shuffle* had great graphics and the mini-games were quite fun and stayed faithful to the hedgehog's universe. Unfortunately, a radical decision would kill most of the game's appeal.

## TOO ADVANCED FOR ITS TIME

When *Sonic Shuffle* was released at the end of 2000 in the United States and Japan, its online mode – the game's key feature – had been pulled from the game. The developers had run into a few technical problems, and the production cost of an online-enabled title (playing online required dedicated servers, which were expensive) made SEGA and Hudson Soft back down, and they sold the game without this feature. *Sonic Shuffle* was an ideal multiplayer game, and the ability to play frenzied online matches would have been a great boon to the young online market. A true one-of-a-kind product, *Sonic Shuffle* was the only game where Amy's voice was changed. ■



HISTOR

## Zone 6

# THE AFTERMATH OF THE DREAMCAST

While *Sonic Adventure 2* was still under development, the video game world got some shocking news that shattered the balance between the industry's three main competitors: SEGA had decided to pull out of the console market.

### THE LAST DAY OF THE DREAMCAST

January 31, 2001 was a sad day for many. After 15 years of hard work and dedication as a console manufacturer, the Haneda company decided to take extreme measures in order to survive. The Dreamcast, a beloved console for millions of players, did not sell as well as the Japanese giant hoped it would. With almost 11 million units sold, however, it could hardly be considered a failure; the little white box allowed players around the world to discover extraordinary games, and it restored Sonic the Hedgehog's image.



## FANS IN SHOCK

This huge decision was given a lot of thought and had terrible consequences for all SEGA fans. Even though Sony's grasp on the video game market was becoming stronger and stronger, the news came as a huge blow to all the diehard SEGA lovers. From then on, they would not only have to buy the competition's products, but also adapt to new controllers. The Saturn's failure in Europe and America and the Dreamcast's insufficient sales – despite its critical success – proved too much to drain on the company's finances.

## WHAT ABOUT SONIC ADVENTURE 3?

Even though Sonic Team's developers never really talked about this sudden change, they were all in shock – and rightly so. *Sonic Adventure 3* was in preproduction and many staff members fought to make the executives change their minds... to no avail. Yuji Naka was one of them. "Until the end, I fought SEGA's wish to leave the console market. In a way, I knew that if we did not make this decision, the company would file for bankruptcy," Naka recalled. "It was probably a good idea, economically speaking. But on the other hand, I cannot help but think we should have tried our luck and taken the bet." The people in charge decided otherwise, however, making the new SEGA a third-party developer.

After 15 years of hard work and  
dedication as a console manufacturer,  
**SEGA** became a  
multiplatform publisher.



Below, an advertisement for the release of *Sonic Adventure 2 Battle* on the GameCube, along with characters from *Sonic Advance* on the Game Boy Advance.

## THE HEDGEHOG JOINS THE ENEMY

Dreamcast production continued until March 2001. SEGA now had to bury the hatchet with its former rivals.

Thanks to its decades of experience designing video games, SEGA did not need to seduce its former rivals Sony, Nintendo, and newcomer Microsoft. All of them immediately approved the projects that the Haneda company had planned for their respective machines. At first, these projects were mostly ports.

With **Sonic**  
Adventure 2  
**Battle**,  
the famous hedgehog  
made quite an impression  
on the day of the  
**GameCube's**  
European launch.







A screenshot of Tails facing Dr. Eggman in the X-Zone level from *Sonic Advance* (Game Boy Advance, 2001).

## ADAPTATIONS

SEGA was now publishing games on rival platforms, and Sonic was part of this new plan. To begin with, a variety of Dreamcast games were ported to the PlayStation 2, and then later to the GameCube. The famous hedgehog made quite an impression on the day of the GameCube's European launch (May 3, 2002). *Sonic Adventure 2 Battle* was based on the Dreamcast title, with improvements such as additional multiplayer content. Instead of rushing things, SEGA gave its developers the time they needed to learn the ins and outs of all the machines – both consoles and portables – on the market...

## SONIC IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND

SEGA released two handhelds during its time as a console manufacturer: the Game Gear in 1990 and the Nomad – a handheld Genesis – in 1995. When Dreamcast production was halted, Nintendo's Game Boy Advance was ready to be launched, and SEGA could not miss this event. The company decided to create a new title featuring its mascot for this new platform: *Sonic Advance*. To this end, SEGA approached Dimps, a company that had created *Sonic Pocket Adventure* in 1999. Yuji Uekawa, who had worked on *Sonic R* and *Sonic Adventure*, was in charge of the game design. With *Sonic Advance*, Sonic was rejuvenated and looked better than ever in 2D. He was accompanied by Tails, Knuckles, and Amy, who were all playable.

## AN IMPROVED VERSION

At the same time, SEGA decided to release an improved version of *Sonic Adventure* for the GameCube, an idea suggested to SEGA's executives by Takashi Iizuka. He wanted to include the ideas his teams had come up with during the development of the original version for the Dreamcast. "In fact, many people discovered Sonic by playing *Sonic Adventure 2 Battle* on the GameCube, but they did not know about the original episode released on the Dreamcast and wanted to discover it. This is why we decided to create an updated version by improving the gameplay," Iizuka said. "We really thought *Sonic Adventure* was the perfect candidate to show the quality of Sonic games and how fun they were. So we ported the game onto Nintendo's console and added new game modes for the new generation of players."





A screenshot of Team Sonic in action in the game *Sonic Heroes* (GameCube/PlayStation 2/Xbox/PC, 2004).

## SONIC HEROES

Sonic Team knew they had to broaden their horizons to create another Sonic game worthy of the franchise. From then on, all consoles were fair game.

At the end of 2002, SEGA decided to create a new Sonic game for all available platforms. The first step for Sonic Team was to define the basis for development. "We had a chat with Yuji Naka about the different contents that could be included in each version," Takashi Iizuka said. "In the end, we decided to offer the same gameplay and the same features for all consoles, because we wanted the players to share a similar experience, whatever machine they owned." Thus, from the start, the game was developed to be identical on the Xbox, GameCube, and PlayStation 2. Naka, for his part, wanted to put Sonic Team USA in charge of *Sonic Heroes*' development – and this wish was far from vain. As Iizuka told us, "Sonic Team USA works in the United States to 'feel' the needs of the Western market and know how it works, in order to integrate (these needs) into every game we create. But we do not forget our Japanese way of thinking, which allows us to create games for the whole world. For instance, during the development of *Sonic Heroes*, we ran tests with real players. All their remarks were taken into account to really improve the game."

## A MATTER OF TECHNIQUE

This was how the development of *Sonic Heroes* started in the heart of San Francisco, California. But Sonic Team USA's designers were soon faced with a big problem. In the past, they had only developed for one platform at a time, but *Sonic Heroes* was scheduled for release on every home console. In cases of multiplatform titles like this, it's usually better to choose a "lead platform" as the basis for the title's development. Yet Takashi Iizuka says his team did not work that way. "The Xbox and GameCube's capabilities are superior to the PS2's. If we had based our work on the technical capabilities of the latter," he said, "The game would have probably been better on that platform. However, we preferred to optimize each version (of the game) according to its platform in order to have the best gameplay possible. It is true that the PlayStation 2 has less memory, but we hope that players feel the same types of emotions (with this platform) as with the other machines."

## INNOVATION AT THE HEART OF SONIC TEAM

For Takashi Iizuka, *Sonic Heroes* was an opportunity to use unfinished ideas from previous games. Without sacrificing what made the



hedgehog's games so fun, he wanted to try something new. "In the *Sonic Adventure* games, you can only control one character at a time. By offering players the possibility of controlling several avatars simultaneously in *Sonic Heroes*, you increase the fun. Of course, we faced some problems during development, for instance the different movement speeds between the fast heroes and the slower ones. But the more things moved forward, the more we came to understand the game's ideal rhythm."

It took 20 months for the team, composed of 19 members, to complete the development of *Sonic Heroes*. Upon its release, critics were tougher than usual because the gameplay was deemed harder than in previous games. Controlling three characters at the same time made the whole thing more complex and required more focus. Nevertheless, the game sold very well on all three platforms.

## THE NEXT GENERATION

Following the success of *Sonic Heroes*, SEGA knew it could continue to count on its dear mascot. Shortly after the game was released, the

Japanese Sonic Team built the foundations of a new Sonic game. The hero's first steps on next-generation consoles were taken during E3 2005. A few hand-picked journalists were given access to a private room where a video was shown with footage from several games in development, including scenes from a new Sonic title. Unfortunately, it would only take a few days for the video, which was covertly recorded on a cell phone, to be leaked onto the Internet. The game – simply titled *Sonic The Hedgehog* and often referred to by fans as "Sonic The Hedgehog 2006" – was announced for a September 2005 release, and it was poised to make an impact.

It took **20 months**  
for the team, composed of  
**19 members,**  
to complete the development of  
***Sonic Heroes*.**

Artwork of the four playable teams in *Sonic Heroes*: Team Sonic, Team Rose, Team Chaotix, and Team Dark.



## BACK TO BASICS

As Sonic Team explains, the design phase of *Sonic The Hedgehog* (2006) began quickly after the release of *Sonic Heroes*. "If I remember correctly, it was at the end of 2004 that we received the first technical specifications of the future consoles," said Yuji Naka. "The first development kits came at the beginning of 2005 and we started making several demos." With such raw power, the developers knew they could come up with tons of ideas, even if it meant dropping several of them. But they all agreed on the idea of going back to basics to capture what Sonic was originally about. "*Sonic The Hedgehog* (2006) was developed as if it was the very first episode of Sonic," said Naka. Masato Nakamura, musician and composer of the original *Sonic The Hedgehog*, remembered the mascot's first steps into the new generation. "With the power of all the future consoles, we were able to create many, even more

impressive things," Nakamura recalled. "It was from this perspective that we immediately wished to place Sonic in an incredibly vast world." Whether it was on Xbox 360 or PlayStation 3, *Sonic The Hedgehog* (2006) was set to be an evolution, both in terms of fun and graphics.

## FACELIFT

*Sonic The Hedgehog* (2006) was scheduled for the mascot's 15th anniversary, so Sonic Team was feeling the pressure right from the start of development. "What we tried to do was take all the recurring elements in the Sonic series, while adding new things that would please the next-generation players," said Naka. "We thought that players who discovered the hedgehog at his birth would be happy to find sequences reminding them of their childhood. We felt heavy pressure, but we were proud to take part in such a project, and we wanted fans to say it's as good as the original." It was with an unshakable will that the creators of this new title worked for months to design the rebirth of their mascot. Their intention was clear: to place Sonic and his friends in a world that was more realistic than usual. However, the mascot had to go through a redesign phase first. The team gave Sonic a trendy makeover so players could identify with the character. He was given a new hairstyle and put in a Japanese-style universe, unlike his last adventures.

110cm

100cm

90cm

80cm

70cm

60cm

50cm

40cm

00cm





## A MORE REALISTIC STORY

For this title, Sonic Team created a more realistic story than what they'd had in previous episodes. Dr. Eggman (who had taken this name for good after *Sonic Adventure*) was looking for the Flames of Disaster and, to that end, kidnapped young Princess Elise of the Kingdom of Soleanna, a coastal city. Sonic intervened to put an end to the mustachioed villain's evil plans... but failed. From that point, he had to discover what Dr. Eggman was up to and do everything in his power to save the damsel. After *Sonic Adventure 2*, this new game would mark the third time that the hero could interact with human characters, a sign of the plan to place the hedgehog in a more realistic universe.

A test for the photorealistic 3D rendering of the main characters in *Sonic The Hedgehog (2006)*. This test was created by the studio Blur, who also specializes in animation and special effects.

Their intention was to place

**Sonic** and his friends  
in a more **realistic world**,  
but in order to do so,  
the mascot had to go through a  
**redesign** phase.





Artwork and a preparatory drawing of Sonic's transformation into a werehog during the nighttime phase in *Sonic Unleashed*.

## DETRIMENTAL DELAYS

Unfortunately, *Sonic The Hedgehog* (2006) got the worst reception of any game in the long-running franchise. Many fans were anxiously awaiting this game, but in the end, the long and frequent load times got the better of it. In 2006, at the end of development, Yuji Naka left SEGA and founded Prope, a new company that specialized in video games. The team, which was under pressure, could not finish the game in time for the hedgehog's 15-year anniversary. Yet SEGA released it anyway, not wanting to miss its mascot's milestone. Unfortunately, the game had not gotten all the development time it needed to make it as good as possible. It got terrible reviews from both the press and players. Many planned elements had to be dropped, such as an online mode and a real-time day/night cycle. Despite the ability to play as Sonic, Shadow, and Silver — a new hedgehog with telekinetic powers — *Sonic The Hedgehog* (2006) was not the anniversary celebration SEGA had hoped for. Nevertheless, its superb soundtrack (supervised by Masato Nakamura, the original Sonic's composer) and graphics were still praiseworthy.

## THE SONIC ADVENTURE 3 PROJECT

Learning from this failure, SEGA decided to continue with *Sonic Adventure 3*... but without any schedule for the developers. A new team was assembled, including a new director who was a big fan of the hedgehog: Yoshihisa Hashimoto.

During the first few months of development, the team worked on a next-generation 3D engine that could create far better graphics than those seen in *Sonic The Hedgehog* (2006). Special attention was paid to the particle effects, the colors, and the animation speed. It was only natural for this new 3D engine to be named the "Hedgehog Engine".

## A NEW CHALLENGE

The game's development really began at the start of 2005, with no pressures on the team. There were no time constraints, unlike with the previous title, and the team could count on Mr. Hashimoto's experience. "It was the second time I had worked as a director on a game," said Hashimoto. "Before that, I had worked on both *Sonic Adventure* and other products for the PlayStation 2. As a programmer, I am able to see the technical limitations of a game. With this in mind, we tried to deal with the camera, visual effects, lighting, and the quality of the settings as best we could. Furthermore, we really stuck with an easy-to-understand scenario." But instead of diving head first into development, Hashimoto started from a simple remark. "In order to be as efficient as possible, you have



to 'test the temperature' of the team you're going to manage," he said. "This is why I started by meeting with the developers to know what their motivations on this project were."

## REVERSING THE TIDES

During the writing of the story, the game's director knew it was useless to have too many ideas and wanted to make Sonic the only playable character. This led to many discussions within the team, but this idea was finally accepted. However, Yoshihisa Hashimoto knew he had to go even further so as not to disappoint the younger players, especially those who were looking for new experiences. "When we started working on the *Sonic Unleashed* project, I made some preparatory sketches with the art director. On a simple piece of paper, there were several drawings and our goal was to make Sonic a little wilder than usual. This is when we thought that the fans would have very different reactions when seeing our concepts. I said to myself that it would not be a bad thing to 'disrupt' their expectations, and I felt there was huge potential in the design of 'werehog Sonic', who was a cute little character on one hand, but also had a powerful look. We decided to use this idea to make the gameplay even more fun." It was only natural that the game was divided into two distinct parts: the daytime stages where Sonic kept his usual appearance and sped through the levels, and the nighttime stages where he turned into a werehog to fight with his arms and legs, like in many action games. It was then that the game's name was changed from *Sonic Adventure 3* to *Sonic Unleashed*, in order to support the werehog idea.



Artwork of Sonic during the daytime phases in *Sonic Unleashed*, along with a sketch of Chip, his ever-present companion.

Sonic Unleashed was divided into  
**two** distinct parts:  
the **daytime** stages  
where Sonic kept his usual appearance,  
and the **nighttime** stages where  
he turned **into a werehog**.



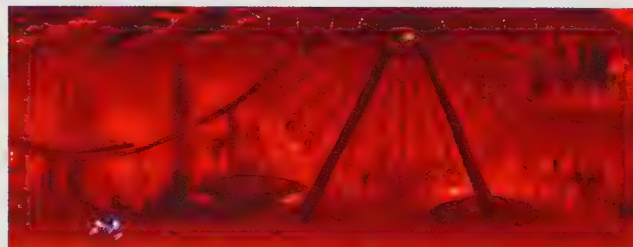
## A CONSTANT DISCOVERY

*Sonic Unleashed* got a much better reception than *Sonic The Hedgehog* (2006) and was truly a marvelous game, even if the nighttime stages were panned by many critics. Nevertheless, players just had to explore a little to discover the huge number of combat options implemented by Sonic Team. It was a platform game with some action sequences and several kinds of combos and attacks. The controls were very simple and you could play the game easily by just mashing all the buttons, but there was also depth there for those who wanted to take the time to learn the game's nuances and pull off more spectacular moves. "You just needed to play *Sonic Unleashed* for a few minutes to realize that the hedgehog had undergone a complete change," said Hashimoto. "The feeling of speed was fantastic and the werehog sequences provided another kind of fun."

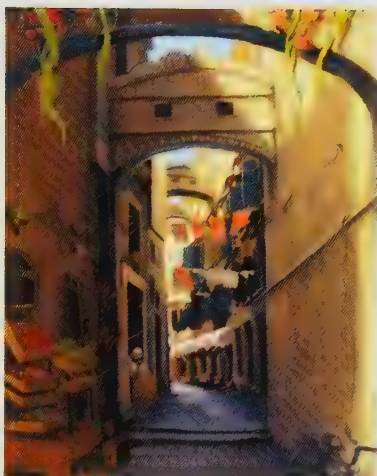
The game's many different explorable locations were also very enjoyable, and they were inspired by many real places (the city of Apotos, for example, came from the Greek city Mykonos). Finally, the "Hedgehog Engine" worked wonders by displaying gorgeous backgrounds. But another reason for the success of *Sonic Unleashed* was the return of a Sonic Team figurehead: Takashi Iizuka. During the game's development, Sonic Team USA was disbanded and its members came back to Japan. "The environment within SEGA had changed after Yuji Naka left the company to create Prope, but the return of Sonic Team USA to Japan was a good thing," explained Yoshihisa Hashimoto. "Today, Takashi Iizuka is the associate director of the studio. Otherwise, we are still the same group that keeps developing Sonic games, with the same passion. I've worked with Mr. Iizuka in the past on the *Sonic Adventure* series, so it was a real pleasure to work with him again." There is no doubt that *Sonic Unleashed* was also influenced by this Sonic Team veteran. In the end, critics were tough on *Sonic Unleashed*, but the players were there to support Sonic Team's new masterpiece. While the hedgehog was on a roll, however, his destiny was about to take a strange turn.



Background designs created for *Sonic Unleashed*.





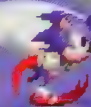


## MARIO AND SONIC: THE SACRED MEETING

On March 28, 2007, video game players around the world were in for a shock. In a joint press release, Nintendo and SEGA announced an all-new project: Sonic and Mario were going to be together, both playable, in a single game!

Twenty years ago, this announcement would probably have caused a civil war between gamers, as Mario and Sonic always had their own fans who were fiercely loyal and typically sided with one or the other. But little by little, the situation had changed. The Dreamcast, SEGA's last stand as a first-party developer, had come and gone. Rumors of SEGA making Sonic games for Nintendo consoles had gone from whisper to fact — and they were good games, to boot! In the year following the Dreamcast's discontinuation, SEGA adapted *Sonic Adventure 2*, a Dreamcast game, to the GameCube, bringing even more SEGA and Nintendo fans together. Soon after, several more re-releases and new productions followed, including *Sonic Heroes*. A total of seven games featuring the hedgehog were released on the GameCube, which was, perhaps ironically, Nintendo's bluest console. All the signs were there, and what would come next would topple sales charts as two of gaming's biggest icons teamed up for one blockbuster title.

The "Hedgehog Engine"  
worked wonders  
by displaying gorgeous  
backgrounds.



## A NOT SO FOOLISH APRIL FOOL

Mario and Sonic were suddenly sharing the spotlight on the same platform. What if they met? The idea first started growing in players' minds in April 2002, thanks to the journalists at the American magazine *Electronic Gaming Monthly* (EGM). If players managed to defeat 20 wire frame characters in Cruel Melee mode in the game *Super Smash Bros. Melee* – no easy feat – Sonic and his faithful companion Tails would become available as playable characters... or so EGM

promised. Players wasted no time: the best in the world quickly defeated the 20 enemies, reaching 500 and even 10,000 by exploiting a glitch in the game. Their efforts were in vain, of course; neither character was actually in the game. It was an April Fool's joke! Fans were disappointed, of course. But what they did not know was that Yuji Naka, the hedgehog's creator, and Shigeru Miyamoto, Mario's creator, also wanted the hedgehog and the plumber to meet.

## ALIEN VS. PREDATOR?

Nobody knows when the talks really began in the first place. It was only in February 2005 that, in an interview given to the British Official Nintendo Magazine, Yuji Naka admitted that he had talked about a crossover several times with Shigeru Miyamoto. This revelation followed the announcement of *Mario Kart Arcade GP*, an installment of the famous racing series in which Mario challenged... Pac-Man! The

On March 28, 2007,  
**Nintendo and SEGA**  
announced an all-new project:  
**Sonic and Mario**  
were going to be together,  
both playable,  
in a **single** game!





time for such fantasy meetings had come, or so it seemed. But two problems were raised. First, developers were already overwhelmed with work. They had no time for such a huge venture! Bringing Mario and Sonic together was more complicated than it seemed: "Imagine Sonic in a *Mario Kart* (game)," Naka laughingly said. "Of course there wouldn't be any need for a kart; he is so fast he'd do better on foot!" It was difficult to find a common direction that would suit both characters. It was also impossible to have one of them play second fiddle in the other one's adventure, considering they were both icons. "If Mario and Sonic were in the same game, they would have to share the same spotlight, some sort of 'Mario vs. Sonic,'" Naka confirmed. "They could be allies, but I always imagined a rivalry, kind of like *Alien vs. Predator*." Their meeting seemed to be a complicated matter, and Miyamoto and Naka agreed it would be best to leave them to their own adventures.

## THE MAGIC OF THE OLYMPICS

Unexpectedly, the miracle sparkle came from the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The year was 2006, and SEGA had just

obtained the video game rights to the next Olympics. The developers wondered, "What would be the best way to take advantage of this license on the Wii?" "By widening the potential audience," the IOC answered, as it wanted to make the best of this video game adaptation to attract new people to the Olympics. With such a large cast of popular characters, including Sonic, Tails, Dr. Robotnik, and the rest of the gang, SEGA had already laid some of the groundwork. But they did not stop there, and asked Nintendo to add Mario to this cast. Jackpot! A rallying theme, peaceful atmosphere, sporting rivalry, and worldwide event: all the ingredients were there to convince Nintendo that it was the right game at the right time. Everything then started falling into place: *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™* was announced at the beginning of 2007 before selling like crazy during the holidays! It was the beginning of a long partnership. The hedgehog and the plumber met the following year in *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* for the Wii, then competed again for Olympic gold in *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™* at the end of 2009, and once more in *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™* at the end of 2011. Nearly 20 years after his debut, the world's most famous hedgehog was still competing with his eternal rival. In the end, nothing had changed. ■

Dr. Eggman, Sonic, Mario, and Wario all set for the race in *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™*.



# INTERVIEW WITH YUJI NAKA



Yuji Naka was born on September 17, 1965 in the city of Osaka, Japan. He joined SEGA in 1984 as an assistant programmer, where he gained firsthand experience as a specialist in arcade-to-console ports and, in 1988, founded what would become the famous Sonic Team. But it was in 1991 that the young game designer found success alongside graphic designer Naoto Ōshima and level designer Hirokazu Yasuhara. All three men were at the heart of SEGA's biggest success story: Sonic.

### What inspired you to get into video game design?

I was in high school, and I liked my home PC and enjoyed playing arcade games. Since I had a PC at home, I tried learning programming. I tried porting arcade games to the PC, as I thought I could make my own games, which mainly triggered my desire to join SEGA.

### What was your role at SEGA prior to starting work on *Sonic The Hedgehog*?

There were about six years between when I joined SEGA to the eventual creation of Sonic. During that time I worked on a number of projects, such as porting games (from one platform to another) and making original games.

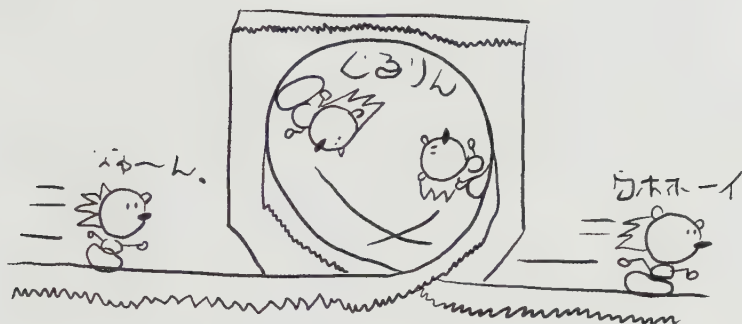
### What were the circumstances that led to you starting the programming for Sonic?

My previous title before Sonic was a port of the arcade game *Ghouls 'n Ghosts*. That was the real key, because the smooth movement of the game map in *Ghouls 'n Ghosts* was very new, so I wanted to really do something with that. But the problem was that *Ghouls 'n Ghosts* was very slow, which led to me wanting to do something like that but in a faster game.

### How did the project proposal come about at SEGA?

From the company's perspective, SEGA and Nintendo were in a rivalry at the time, so SEGA wanted to create a character to compete against Nintendo. And in Mario, even if you're an experienced gamer, it will take 30 or 40 seconds to finish the first level, and I wanted to give a faster experience to cut down that time.





Making **looping** structures  
proved to be a very tough challenge  
because when **Sonic**  
was moving too fast,  
he would break through the  
**loop**  
instead of run around it.

# GREEN HILL ZONEの仕方

## What was your main inspiration or idea when you started to program *Sonic The Hedgehog*?

I like fast things, and I thought that providing a quick experience was important because, back then, there was no backup or saving system; every time you played a game, you had to play it from the beginning. So we thought that providing a game where you would be able to finish the levels more quickly as you got better would provide a continued challenge and greater reward to the player.

## This idea of making such a fast game had not been done before, so how difficult or challenging was it to program this for the Genesis/Mega Drive?

Although the Mega Drive was higher-end hardware at the time, it was still not suitable for games like what I was trying to achieve with Sonic, so we had to try very hard to make it work.

## What were the main challenges in coding for the Genesis/Mega Drive?

The main difference compared to programming other games was that previous games tended to have block structures, with maps comprised of many different blocks, but what we tried to do in Sonic was get rid of the individual blocks and create entire maps that would move smoothly. When we figured out how to make smooth maps, we thought we might be able to make looping structures as well. However, that proved to be a very tough challenge because when Sonic was moving too fast, he would break through the loop instead of run around it, so that was a difficult problem to solve.

## Could you take us through the process of programming *Sonic The Hedgehog*?

Previous games such as *Ghouls 'n Ghosts* were based on flat terrain, so everything happens in a flat space and the angle of the character to the surface always remains the same; the characters all stand straight for the whole game. But with Sonic's loops and such, we had to do something different because the terrain changes. As Sonic runs through the loops, his angle to the surface changes as well, so initially he would bump into a wall, then his angle would shift, and then he would bump into another wall and shift his angle again, so he wasn't smooth at all and we had to work around that. We had to change what we now call his "vector" to make him move smoothly, and that was a very hard process, particularly with the programming knowledge we had at the time. When we managed to finally solve that problem and make Sonic move smoothly, we were very happy about it!



## Can you tell us about the team and what your goal was?

There were only seven people on the team: two sound engineers, three game designers, and two programmers. The three designers were Ōshima-san, Hirokazu Yasuhara, and myself. We wanted to make the game look and feel like America's West Coast, but we also wanted the computer graphics to really shine through, which was rare in the gaming world at the time. For example, with Green Hill Zone, we tried to bring it to life through a pixel art technique called "ray tracing", which took one year. Part of this time was spent just making decisions and getting approvals, but it shows how hard it was. However, after creating Green Hill Zone, making the rest of the levels was much easier. The team communicated very well and enjoyed the challenging project.

## What other challenges came up while designing the game?

Because of Sonic's incredible speed, the background moves at 16 dots every 60<sup>th</sup> of a second, so we had to adapt how we designed the backgrounds. Creating the backgrounds conventionally made them look strange, because when the game ran at full speed, the backgrounds gave the illusion that they were going backward, much like spokes on a spinning wheel. Also, we wanted to give Green Hill Zone a blue Californian sky, but putting a blue Sonic beneath a blue sky posed a problem because he blended in with the background. So we had to make him recognizable in the game, but we also couldn't change his color too much because blue was SEGA's official color, and that was part of his identity.

## What was it like working with Naotō Ōshima?

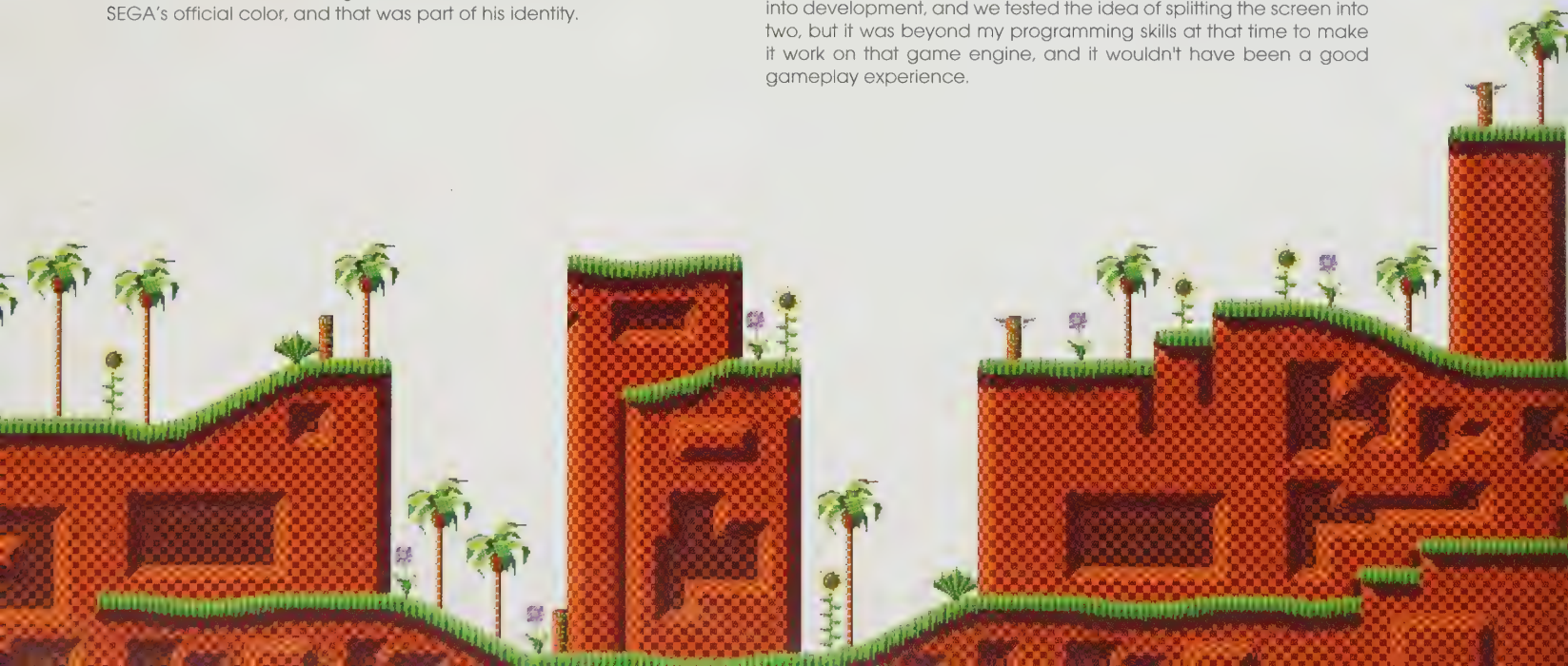
He's always full of good ideas and passion for the title. He's first and foremost a designer, not an artist. We've actually run into a couple of problems because of that; he's excellent when it comes to working on overall pictures, but he's not so good at sketching out the details, even though I don't claim to be a good artist myself at all. So there's a difference between a designer and an artist, but in the end we managed to find a way to make things work in pixel art.

## How did you come to decide on the best speed for Sonic?

Initially we tried to give him the maximum speed that we could achieve in terms of programming skills, but sometimes the game would make us sick because he was too fast, so we'd slow it down and adjust it a little bit. In the end, though, I think we more or less went with the maximum speed that we could get at the time.

## What elements did you want to include in the first game, but couldn't?

There were two main things I wanted to incorporate into the original game that didn't happen. The first one was a heroine. All the characters in the game are guys, and I wanted to add a female character named Madonna, and Sonic was supposed to save this Madonna. But we thought this would be too close to Mario saving his princess, so even though I still thought it would be a good idea, we had to give up on it. But when *Sonic 1* was first revealed at a toy show, we still had Sonic and Madonna in the same picture, so if you were at the show you would have thought that Madonna was going to be in the game. The other thing I wanted to do that didn't happen was a two-player mode. I came up with this idea fairly late into development, and we tested the idea of splitting the screen into two, but it was beyond my programming skills at that time to make it work on that game engine, and it wouldn't have been a good gameplay experience.





**Did those missing elements end up in a later game?**

For multiplayer, after completing *Sonic 1*, I moved to America and I had not intended to make another Sonic game when I got there. I was about 26 at the time, and once I got to America, SEGA asked me if I could make another Sonic game. Being a young man, I said I'd only make another Sonic game if I could include a two-player mode which, looking back, was very cheeky of me. So we started the research necessary to create a two-player Sonic game. The research took about two months, and the result was *Sonic 2*.

**When *Sonic 1* was finished, what was the reaction from others at SEGA about the game?**

While my development team and I were satisfied with the quality of the game, the reception from other people in the company – including the supervisor at the time – was not very positive. That was one of the main reasons I left SEGA of Japan after *Sonic 1*.

Because of

**Sonic's  
incredible speed,**  
we had to  
adapt how we  
**designed  
the backgrounds.**

Overview of the level design for the first act of Green Hill Zone in *Sonic The Hedgehog*.



**So 20 years later, how successful do you think the Sonic franchise has been?**

At the time, SEGA and Nintendo were rivals, and we were constantly thinking about how we could beat Nintendo. We wanted to give the original game a tag line – "number one hit in America" – which sounds very attractive in the Japanese market. So we always looked outside of Japan, and even though we were based in Haneda, a little corner of Tokyo, Sonic was widely accepted in America, and the reception was better than we could have imagined.

**What are your thoughts on the rivalry between Sonic and Mario over the years?**

I'm not sure if Sonic and Mario are rivals. I think their games both excel at different things, even though they are both platformers. What makes Sonic's games fun is very different from what makes Mario's games fun, so they are more like good friends than rivals.

Looking back, how does it feel to see Sonic as one of the most famous and recognized characters in both popular culture and video game history?

Sonic is a video game character who went way beyond the realm of just video games. Mario is also a famous character from video games, but he could have been anyone; Sonic's character design came as a logical consequence from what was required to play the game. For example, he's a hedgehog and he has spikes on his back because he can run past enemies, and having spikes shows his speed and energy. If you take another character, like Mickey Mouse for example, he doesn't need to have that big pair of ears; there's no

**I nurtured**  
him for the first **15** years,  
so he still feels  
like a **child**  
to me, and I'm  
**happy** to see  
him growing  
**the way**  
he is.







Original sketches for Sonic's animation on the title screen of *Sonic The Hedgehog*.

need for those ears, so he's just a character. But with Sonic, there's a close relationship between his being a hedgehog and the content of the game. I think it's a good thing for the gaming industry that he's been as successful as he has.

**After the success of *Sonic 1*, did you have added pressure to make a better game with *Sonic 2*?**

After *Sonic 1*, I moved to America and saw the game's success firsthand, and the question of whether or not we were going to create *Sonic 2* soon came up. I had a strangely confident feeling that if we could add a two-player mode, we'd be successful. Also, with *Sonic 1* we were all working on programming the game without knowing what it would be like, so there were many things that we could potentially improve, such as speed. Since we knew we would have more time to work on those improvements for *Sonic 2*, I knew we'd be able to make a much better game, so I wasn't really worried about it.

**How does it feel that Sonic is now 20 years old?**

The 20 years have gone by very quickly. I nurtured him for the first 15 years, so he still feels like a child to me, and I'm happy to see him growing the way he is. He's 20 years old now, which means he would be an adult in our world, so I'm looking forward to seeing him grow more in the future.

**When thinking about your contributions to the Sonic universe, what is your happiest memory?**

After creating Sonic, we started receiving letters from fans. Nothing like this had ever happened before Sonic, even though we had been creating games for a long time. We received letters from so many gamers from so many different countries; some of the kids

would draw Sonic, and others would draw sketches of his new rivals. I remember that one of the kids told us that we could use his enemies if we wanted to, but to please let him know if we did. I thought that was very cute and cheeky at the same time. Even after leaving SEGA, I've still continued to receive those letters, and I get such a special and fantastic feeling from getting to connect with these people who I've never met before.

**Is there anything further that you would like to say to fans?**

He's 20 years old now, but Sonic will grow much more in the future, and he will need your help to be successful. Please keep giving him your support.

**What is the secret behind the popularity of the Sonic character and his games?**

That's actually a good question, as we don't fully understand why he's so popular ourselves. So we can only guess, but one of the reasons is probably because you can enjoy his games even if you miss a few details here and there. Also, Sonic is unique among video game characters; he's cool and stylish, and he also has a devil-may-care attitude where he only does what he wants to do. He's never told to do something. But as I said, we don't know exactly why he is so popular. People say they like Sonic but don't often say why, so if you happen to send a letter to Sonic Team, I'm sure they would appreciate it if you could give them a reason or two as to why you like Sonic. ■



# INTERVIEW WITH NAOTO ÔSHIMA



Born on January 26, 1964 in Japan, graphic designer Naoto Ôshima was at the center of the trio that created Sonic. Indeed, he was the one who designed SEGA's mascot. A talented artist, he also worked on many other great video games such as *Phantasy Star*, *Sonic CD*, *NIGHTS into Dreams*, *Burning Rangers*, and *Sonic Adventure*.

### Have you always wanted to be a comic book artist?

As a child I loved the artist Akira Toriyama, who created the *Dragon Ball* manga. I also enjoyed U.S. comic books, such as *Superman*, *Spider-Man*, *Hulk*, and *Batman*. Initially, I was obsessed with becoming a manga artist, but because the *Dragon Ball* artist had started out in design, I decided to follow that path and switched to studying design instead.

### What was your main inspiration when you were young?

Comics, such as U.S. comic books and heroes, like *Conan* and *The Punisher*. I specifically liked the idea of the lone fighter or hero, and I was definitely influenced by a Japanese manga called *Casshern*.

### How did you feel about game design when you first got into it?

It was different from what I thought it would be, as I had to work on other people's ideas and designs. It was awhile before I got the chance to actually start producing and developing my own ideas.

### What was your role at SEGA prior to designing Sonic?

My first official assignment was to do enemy art for *Phantasy Star*. At the time, I was also working on a few other projects without my supervisor's consent in order to start getting more experienced and start building up my own ideas.

### What year did you start at SEGA?

1987.

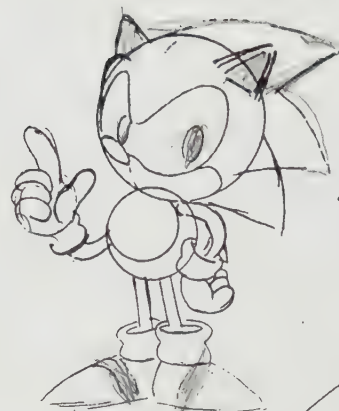




☆ソニックは 円で 構成  
それたものに 肉付け  
して下さい。



☆まぶたは  
肌色です。



☆カラーリングは  
サンタ仕様

☆マイケル・ジャクソン仕様  
ダンス・シーク・ショートブーツ



←ブーツの  
折り返し

こめがね  
ゴールド

**You must have been working very hard since you had your main job during the day, and were working on different, unofficial projects at night. Was this difficult to do?**

It was hard work, but I enjoyed it because I was passionate about it. In the end, though, my supervisor found out and I got told off, so from then on I always got approval from him.

**Did your supervisor get angry because he didn't think you were committed to your official assignment?**

I understood his point of view because, looking back, considering my colleagues' workload, it was a natural reaction for him to get mad, as it looked like I wasn't focused on my main responsibilities.

**What was the thinking behind the creation of the idea for Project Needlemouse?**

Prior to working at SEGA, I worked for an advertisement company for one year. Because of that experience, I always felt that there were so many good ideas and characters at SEGA, but most of them never made it out of brainstorming sessions, which I felt was a waste. So I always wanted to create a character that could go far beyond just being a video game character, and I created some concepts, but it was really hard to get consent from my supervisor at the time. So when Mr. Naka finished his latest project, I went directly to him and asked if he would like to create a game concept together, and he said yes.

**Where did you get the inspiration to create SEGA's mascot?**

At the time, SEGA was looking for a new game that would sell in the U.S., and at the same time, it was looking for a new company mascot. At that time, Naka-san and I were working together, and we had a rough prototype of a game, and I was also working with the toy and stationery department, coming up with design ideas. Once the internal presentation rolled around, we already had quite a lot to show, so the company decided to support our proposals, and gave us time to fully realize the project.

**You mentioned that you already had rough ideas for a game and toys, so how was it working with the other departments?**

There were many other teams that presented their ideas for SEGA's mascot, but I think we were the only one that spent so much time and effort and involved so many different departments, so I was very confident that we would be selected.

**How did you feel when your idea was selected?**

SEGA decided to give us its full support to push forward with Sonic, so I was very happy and motivated.



**Is this when you started working on the story and other elements of the game?**

Yes. Up to that point we had been trying to establish a character to move forward with the project, so after that we tried to create other characters, such as a human girlfriend for Sonic, a bearded middle-aged man, and a character that looked like a rabbit. One summer, I went to New York on vacation, and I took the sketches of all these characters with me. While there, I went to Central Park and asked passers-by which character they liked the most, and the favorite was Sonic. The second favorite was the bearded middle-aged man, who would later come to be known as Dr. Eggman.

**So before you decided on Sonic, what other characters did you create?**

As candidates, we had Sonic, Eggman, the rabbit character, a character that looked like a bulldog, and maybe a few more that I can't remember, but Sonic was my personal favorite all along.

**You mentioned that you went to Central Park with a bunch of sketches; was that after you picked Sonic?**

No, that was before I picked Sonic. I wanted to provide evidence supporting him when I presented my ideas to the supervisors.

**So it was sort of "marketing research" in a way?**

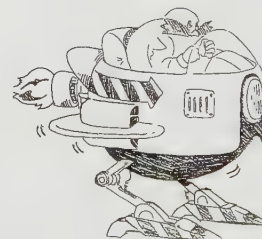
Yes, kind of.

**So as a character, was Sonic designed for the U.S. market or the global market?**

That is a hard question. I have always loved American characters, but being Japanese myself, I designed the character to also be accepted in Japan, so it's not that Sonic was only intended for America.

**Sonic is red, white, and blue. Is that why he resonates so well with America?**

Blue as a color means peace and coolness, and Sonic's red shoes come from Santa Claus. I didn't make him red, white, and blue to make him American.





**I heard that, initially, Sonic was in a band and had a human girlfriend. Can you elaborate on that?**

When I showed off Sonic's design, everyone thought that he was a cute child, but in my mind, Sonic is actually a little older and more mature. So to better communicate the fact that he was actually a man, I gave him a human, adult girlfriend and put him in a band. I also created sketches and a backstory to show his personality, but they don't appear in the games.

**How was the name "Sonic" decided upon?**

I forgot who in the development team first said it, but "Sonic" as a name just perfectly represents the idea of speed. Legally, though, "sonic" is a major, often-used term, so we hesitated a bit, but in the end "Sonic" was just the perfect fit, so we decided to go for it.

**Why is Sonic blue?**

Because blue was SEGA's official color, and also because blue symbolizes peace and coolness. It's also the color of the earth, and I hope that our planet will continue to have this beautiful blue forever.

**Personality-wise, do you see any of yourself in Sonic?**

I'm not really one of those people who stands out, but perhaps Sonic is kind of an ideal personality to me. Sonic is impulsive; he acts before he thinks, no matter what the consequences are. That's also the image I have of Americans. They are impulsive, so that's the kind of ideal personality I wish I had.

**Aside from designing the character, did you also have ideas for how your character might play in the game?**

As a gameplay element, Sonic's incredible speed was new at the time, and so were the loops that looked like roller coasters. Sonic was clearly the fastest character in gaming, so Naka-san said he wanted to make Sonic roll up into a ball shape when he was going fast and make him invincible when in that shape, which is perfect for a hedgehog. But the problem was that we had to communicate his speed in screenshots and static images, so we used his spikes to help relay that sense of speed by showing them being pushed back when he's running fast. It was like fitting the pieces of a puzzle together, because everything pointed to a hedgehog being the perfect choice for this new Sonic character.



At first,  
I gave him a  
**human,**  
adult  
**girlfriend**  
and put him  
in a  
**band.**

## At what stage in Sonic's development did work begin on the actual game?

Initially, it was a slightly different game; the player's character was a human child. But the main concept was the same: we wanted to make a very speedy game with stages that looked like roller coasters, but because of the game's incredible speed, we had a problem. I didn't know a programmer who could program such fast gameplay, but someone suggested that I ask Mr. Naka. He was already famous at the time as a creator, so I went to Naka-san, explained the project, told him that it was a very fast game, and asked him if he could make it, and he said, "Of course I can, there is nothing I can't make!"

## What was it like working with Naka-san, and what was his input on the game?

Initially it was just Naka-san and myself on the team, just the two of us. We started making sketches of characters and enemies and making maps for level designs. But as we started to need more content, we began assigning more people to the team. In the early stages of development, though, I would discuss everything with Naka-san and the key decisions were made between the two of us.

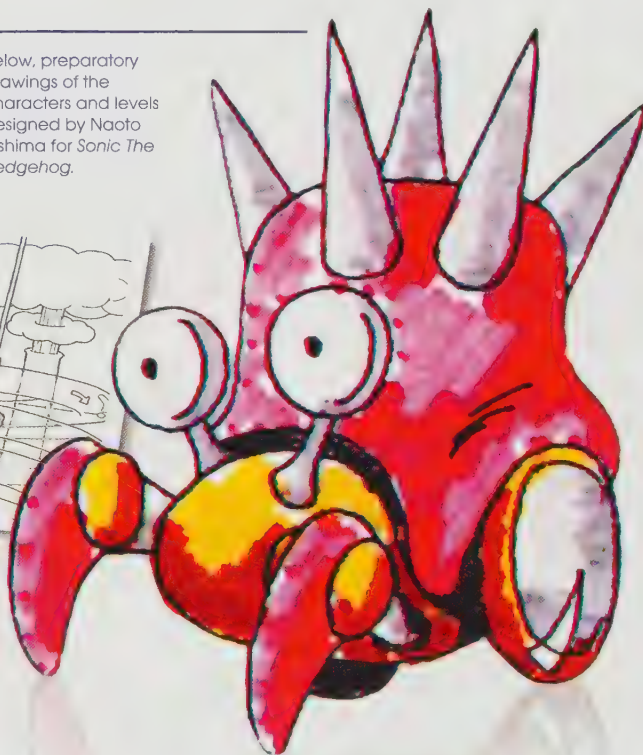
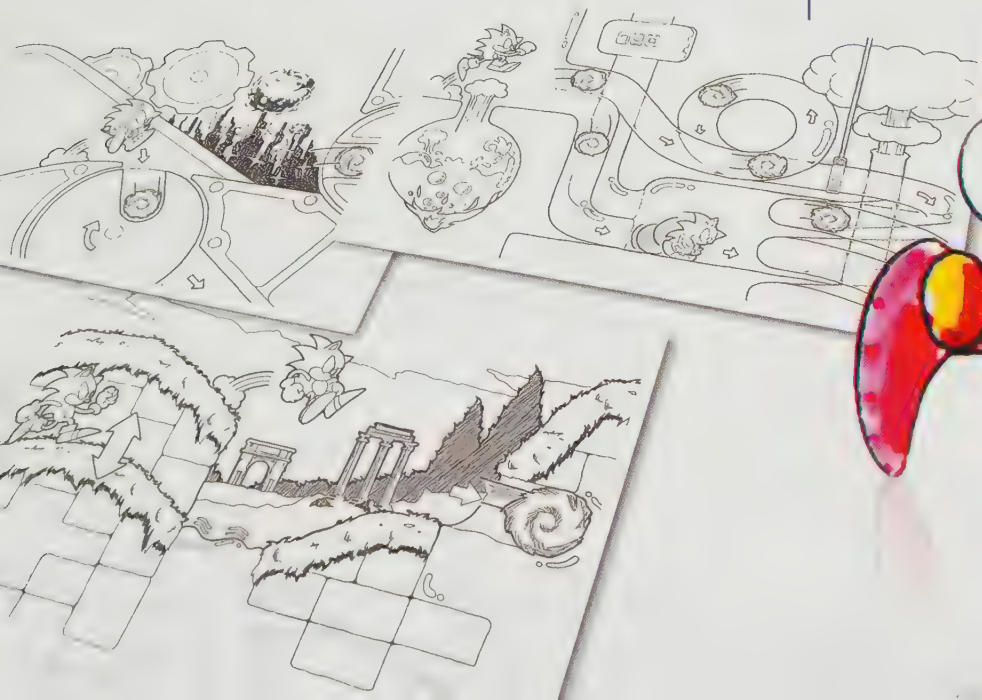
## What was your reaction when you first saw the finished version of *Sonic 1*?

*Sonic 1* was really fast; so fast that even I struggled to beat the game. But when I play well, I can travel a great distance in just a few seconds. Nowadays applying physics in games is standard, but it was very new at the time, and some people didn't know how to play initially. Sonic's movement was very realistic and innovative, though.

## What other contributions did you make to the Sonic franchise once the first game had been finished?

I've always wanted Sonic to keep evolving. I didn't want him to adhere to some kind of tradition; I wanted him to face new challenges. I knew that if I kept working on Sonic that I would want to keep evolving him and adding new elements to his games. Sure enough, 20 years after *Sonic 1*, he's evolved into his new self, and I've always enjoyed watching him change over the years.

Below, preparatory drawings of the characters and levels designed by Naoto Ōshima for *Sonic The Hedgehog*.







Artwork of the enemies in *Sonic The Hedgehog*, drawn by Naoto Ōshima.

#### **So how do you see Sonic changing over the next 20 years?**

I don't have a specific idea about how I would like him to be in 20 more years. I only wish for him to constantly keep changing and evolving, and how he will change will depend on the trends and developers at the time, so for now I'm just looking forward to seeing what those changes will be.

#### **What are your thoughts on the rivalry between Sonic and Mario over the years?**

First of all, I am honored that you say Sonic and Mario are rivals. Whether or not Sonic is truly Mario's rival is not up to us, it's up to gamers, and I'm very happy and honored that some people put Mario and Sonic on equal ground. What makes Sonic's games fun is very different from what makes Mario's games fun, and they are aimed at different markets and gamers as well. I am a big fan of action games, so I look forward to seeing Sonic continue to push the boundaries of what action games can be.

#### **Looking back, how does it feel to see Sonic as one of the most famous and recognized characters in both popular culture and video game history?**

The beginning was important, of course, but Sonic is where he is today because of all the people who have both loved and worked hard on his games over the years. In particular, we owe a lot to [Takashi] Iizuka, a creator I deeply respect. Early on, he showed a lot of passion and talent, and I was convinced that he was the man to push Sonic to the next level; and he's still creating brilliant Sonic titles to this day. Sonic wouldn't be where he is today without Iizuka.

#### **How does it feel that Sonic is now 20 years old?**

I'm just happy that he's still loved by so many people. There are so many characters around the world that are more than 50 or 100 years old, and I want Sonic to be loved for many years to come. This, of course, will depend on SEGA's future creators, so I look forward to seeing bright new developers who love Sonic and bring him and his universe into the next generation.

#### **When thinking about your contributions to the Sonic universe, what is your happiest memory?**

I have many good memories of working on Sonic, but the biggest moment for me was *Mario and Sonic (at the Olympic Games)*. Mario is the number one gaming character, so it felt special when Mario and Sonic appeared in the same game, and 20 years ago that would have been impossible.

#### **Is there anything further you would like to add, specifically for fans?**

Now I am "just" a gamer as well, and I will keep on supporting Sonic as a gamer. I would be very happy if all other gamers could keep giving Sonic their warm support in the future as well. ■

# 20 QUESTIONS FOR TAKASHI IIZUKA



He is the producer of *Sonic Generations* (2011), the series' artistic director since *Sonic Adventure* (1999), and a member of Sonic Team since *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* (1994). For the hedgehog's 20th anniversary, Takashi Iizuka shared his many memories from two decades of creating Sonic games.

**Hello, Iizuka-san. To start with, can you tell us how you ended up working at SEGA?**

When I was little, I really wanted to become a "mangaka". I went to school and, little by little, I forgot about this dream. When I was at university, I even chose a rather scientific major that involved a lot of mathematics and science. I was convinced that I would become a typical salary man in electronics or the technology industry in general. It was at that time that I suddenly became nostalgic for my creative childhood, and I said to myself, "Well, working in the technology industry is good, but it should be technology that fosters creativity and dreams..." It just so happened that I was lucky enough to both get a job interview at SEGA and be hired. *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* was the very first game on which I worked.

**Do you remember what you did on *Sonic 3*?**

I worked on level designs. There were three level designers for *Sonic 3* and *Sonic & Knuckles*. So a third of the levels was created by me. Specifically, I created the bonus stages.

***Sonic 3* and *Sonic & Knuckles* were supposed to be the same game at first. Can you tell us what happened?**

Indeed, what was originally supposed to be *Sonic 3* was divided into two parts for several reasons. Our project was to create a game with much more content than *Sonic The Hedgehog* and *Sonic 2*. As we moved further into development, though, we kept coming up with new ideas, and the game got bigger and bigger. Two problems were then raised. First, there was an advertising campaign scheduled with McDonald's at the end of the year, and we had to release the



game before that. Secondly, we had gone beyond the storage limit of the Mega Drive cartridges — 16 megabits, if I remember correctly — before the game was even finished, and it became obvious that something had to give. We had to make a choice, and we decided to release two separate games.

**The soundtrack in *Sonic 3* has become legendary. Is it true that you worked with Michael Jackson on it?**

You know, those are just rumors, and SEGA does not want to say anything about them. So they will forever be just rumors...

**At the beginning of *Sonic 3*'s development, there was a prototype 3D Sonic that relied on the SEGA Virtua Processor (SVP) chip, but it was never completed. Can you tell us more?**

The programmer at the time, Yuji Naka, had an idea. Since Mega Drive cartridges could use special chips to do things like display more complex graphics, we wanted to emphasize the "3" in *Sonic 3* to create a 3D game. In order to do so, he wanted to use the SVP chip, used for the first time in *Virtua Racing*. But the tests were not conclusive. In racing games, there aren't too many polygons to display, but in action games, the settings are more complex, with many enemies, platforms, et cetera. So it's much more complicated. What I saw was barely a prototype. The Mega Drive's processor,

even with the chip, did not allow us to create the polygon-based Sonic that we wanted, so this experiment was quickly dropped.

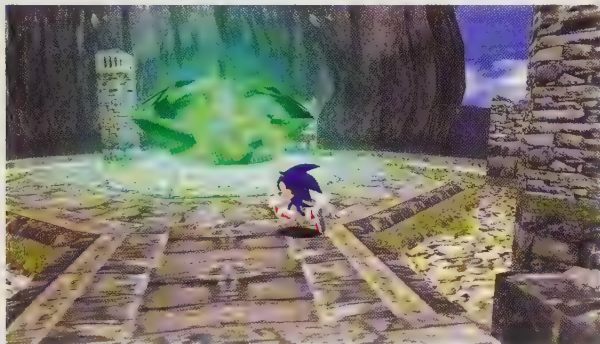
**Did you already have an idea about the kind of camera to use in this prototype 3D Sonic?**

No. Because it was still a pre-test, there weren't even any ideas about game design. They were only experiments. The project wasn't even canceled since its development hadn't even begun!

Artwork and screenshots taken from *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* and *Sonic & Knuckles*.



Screenshots from *Sonic Adventure*.



**When you started working on *Sonic Adventure*, the first real 3D Sonic, what were the main difficulties you encountered?**

The biggest challenge was that, after the Mega Drive episodes, all of us in Sonic Team took a break for several years to work on *NIGHTS into Dreams*. Another studio was then put in charge of creating a Sonic game for the Saturn called *Sonic X-Treme*. The problem was that, even though *Sonic X-Treme* was in 3D, it did not match the Sonic universe or the image SEGA wanted to show at all. The project was simply rejected. We said to ourselves, "Making a 3D Sonic... what if it is impossible?" Then the Dreamcast came along and we saw what our rivals could do, so we understood that we would have to create 3D games. Sonic had to evolve. The executives came to see us and explained, "We know it's hard, but you don't have a choice; you have to make us a 3D Sonic." Faced with such a challenge, the whole team said, "Oh my, what are we going to do?" We had seen with our own eyes that it did not work. But we still did a few tests and, thanks to them, we managed to set an interesting camera angle. It followed Sonic while giving clear instructions on the path to follow. Some places raised a few problems, like the loop-de-loops, because the view had to show the way to go while still giving a feeling of speed. So we made it possible for the camera to change angles when Sonic arrives at a loop so the player can see him run around it. It made the whole experience more dynamic. This camera system could adapt to Sonic's position. This is when we understood that it was possible to go from 2D to 3D without losing the fast and furious aspect that had always been the series' main quality. SEGA even patented this dynamic camera system.

**You mentioned rivals; you meant Nintendo and *Super Mario 64*, right? Did that act as a driving force, an extra motivating factor for the whole team working on *Sonic Adventure*?**

We did see that our rivals were making their characters evolve, but we did not really feel any pressure, to tell you the truth. For us,

making a 3D Sonic was a natural evolution. Everybody was asking for it, so we had to take on this challenge. But we realized that in our rivals' platform games, the characters moved in an open world. The players could move around freely, but some of them got lost and did not know where to go or what path to take. We really wanted to avoid this kind of situation because it broke the game's rhythm, and the feeling of unstoppable speed was the essence of all Sonic games. In the 2D Sonic games, we realized that, by pressing the right button on the D-pad, the player advanced through the level, and we only had to find a good rhythm to make that interesting. We wanted to keep this simplicity in control and translate it into 3D. So we had to make it possible for the player to press the up button to control the character, without ever losing sight of them or having to do tons of button combinations, while keeping the feeling of speed. This is why we created 3D worlds that were not completely open, and prevented players from getting lost.

**Do you remember how the audience reacted when you first presented *Sonic Adventure*?**

Yes. At the time, it was revolutionary and extremely impressive. The first time we showed *Sonic Adventure* in Japan, it was the Speed Highway level. During the presentations in the morning, when I was playing, what was on the screen was so impressive, with all the camera movements and such, that the people in attendance thought it was a video! They could not believe that what they were seeing was the game in real time, and they told us so. We even said, "Gosh, we did something wrong!" So for the afternoon presentation, I played again, but this time, I crashed into things on purpose to show that it was really me playing!



The first time we showed the  
**Speed Highway  
level**

from *Sonic Adventure*,  
the people  
in attendance could not

**believe**  
that it  
was the  
game  
in  
real  
**time.**

Impressive! For the development of *Sonic Adventure*, you also journeyed through South America.

It was a rather complex but magnificent journey! We wanted to have levels taking place in the jungle and in ruins in *Sonic Adventure*. So we went to South America to visit Cancún near Mexico, but also to Guatemala and Peru. I remember that the ruins of Machu Picchu were located at a very high altitude, so much so that one of our programmers passed out and he had to be taken back to the hotel while we continued our visit without him. That person was Mr. Takano, the director of the 3DS version of *Sonic Generations*! If you get the opportunity, you can talk to him about it! (laughs)



A screenshot from *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™* (Wii, 2007).

**The staff for *Sonic Adventure* numbered around 100 people. *Sonic Adventure 2* only had 20. Surely, its development must have been very stressful?**

Actually, if you go back in time, to the time of the Mega Drive, you'll see that *Sonic The Hedgehog* was developed in Japan, and *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* in the United States. SEGA of Japan wanted to repeat that pattern when going 3D: first a Japanese episode that set the basis, then an American episode that gave the series a more international impact. *Sonic Adventure* was designed in Japan with about 100 people, and then I was asked to assemble a team to go to America. I asked my staff, "Who wants to go to the USA with me?" There were only 11 people, who raised their hands! You have to understand their reasoning: it is not easy to leave your life and your family behind to go to a country where you can't speak the language... So the 11 of us went to develop *Sonic Adventure 2*. In the United States, we were forced to hire three or four people that used to work on arcade titles. During the whole development period, there were like 15, 16 of us? We had to change the way we worked, and that was the hard part! We had to save time everywhere: with the programming, the level designing, et cetera, compared to *Sonic Adventure*, and we also had to have better organization. Each member of the staff had to be as efficient as possible, using the smallest amount of time and money they could!

**The world of Sonic in itself is very, very vast. On a personal level, is there a hero besides Sonic who you like very much?**

My favorite, I think, is Shadow. Firstly because his creation was very difficult — there were only 11 of us working on *Sonic Adventure 2* at the time, and we were really pulling our hair out wondering what the game would look like, what its main concept would be, what bosses and characters we would use, etc. But he is also Sonic's dark side, a character who has been very useful because he brought depth to the universe. We knew he would become a major figure in the series. So yes, Shadow is the one that struck me most.

**You were there when Sonic and Mario got together. How did it happen? How did you feel at that moment?**

SEGA had just bought the license for the Olympic Games and wanted to make a game for a wide audience. This is why we decided to use our characters to offer an experience that was very different from those offered by the usual sports games. I wasn't involved in the development of *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™*, but one of our team members had the idea, "Why not have guest stars?", and Mario's name was naturally brought up. We designed a proposal that we submitted to Nintendo, which they accepted, and that was that. Of course, on a personal level, as a developer and a player, I was surprised at first when I was told that Sonic and Mario would be (in a game) together. But I mostly felt joy, because I've always had great respect for the Mario series. The idea of bringing together such a star and the character I had been working on for several years was an honor, and the will to make something good became even greater.



**Was this also how the inclusion of Sonic in *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* was negotiated?**

No, because the idea did not come from Nintendo but directly from the game's director, Mr. Sakurai. He came to see us and we said yes.

**Generally speaking, is the idea of Sonic meeting guest stars an idea you wish to expand?**

Recently, I haven't had many such opportunities. However, Sonic met Banjo and Kazooie in *Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing*. So it is absolutely possible for him to appear with other guest stars someday in the months or years to come.

**The *Sonic Generations* project was born in 2009. Was the game supposed to be an anniversary title from the start?**


What you have to know is that, in 2009, we did know that a Sonic game would be released at the end of 2011, the year of the hedgehog's 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. But that game was *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™*. No one had considered an anniversary game. When I thought about it, I said to myself, "It's quite strange! We need to do something to celebrate this event properly." So I asked my staff and my bosses, and they accepted the idea of a tribute game. So we hurried to develop another title at the same time as *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™*, to be released on time for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was a huge task!



Artwork and a screenshot taken from *Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing*

It is absolutely possible  
for **Sonic**  
to appear with other  
**guest stars**  
someday.





One of the **aims**  
we had in **mind**  
was to **gather**  
several  
**generations**  
around one uniting character.

Because of the fact that *Sonic Generations* mixes 2D and 3D, was it like developing two games at the same time?

It took twice the time, yes!

When it came to selecting the levels, there must have been some heated debates within the team, right?

Well, at first, we had an internal meeting and we ran a poll among all the people at SEGA. And when I say SEGA, I mean SEGA of Japan, SEGA of America, and SEGA Europe! We asked everyone, including the testers, what their favorite levels (from the whole series) were. That allowed us to rank the most popular levels. The second step was to ask the players for their opinions. We created a website with a poll for them to choose their favorite level, and another ranking was made. We then started thinking about the levels we could really use. Why? Because Green Hill Zone, for instance, which is the very first level of *Sonic The Hedgehog*, was number one. It was the level that made the best impression on players. But if you take a look at the second place in the ranking, it was Emerald Hill Zone, the first level of



*Sonic The Hedgehog 2*. But in terms of game design and gameplay, both are very similar! They are both introductory levels, designed in a similar way. The risk of including them both was that we'd have two different levels in terms of graphics, but they would be similar design-wise. In order to add some variety, we picked high-ranking levels, but we selected zones that had completely different concepts, level designs, or gameplay styles. This is why we now have stages that bear no similarities, while still ranking among the players' favorites. There were also other beloved levels that we could not include on the disc because of a lack of space. We knew that would be the case, so we kept them and put them in *Sonic Generations* for the 3DS. This is why both versions do not have the same levels.

**Were there other levels that could not be featured in *Sonic Generations*?**

Yes! The choice of stages on the Internet surprised us on several levels. When studying the answers, we realized one thing: some of the levels that were selected as the most popular were ones that we, the designers, found rather average. However, the players picked them for an unexpected reason: the music! It showed us that, besides the games' fun factor, it was the Sonic universe as a whole

that was loved. We did not necessarily use these levels, but this data allowed us to think about what the essence of the series is.

**According to you, what will Sonic look like in 20 years?**

I don't even know what I will look like in 20 years! (laughs) I do hope I'll still be making games! More seriously, I don't know what Sonic will look like. However, come to think of it, people who discovered the first title when they were ten in 1991 will be 50 in 2031! They'll almost be grandparents! Gathering several generations of players around one uniting character was one of the aims we had in mind with *Sonic Generations*. So in the future, Sonic might play that role again by uniting two generations of players. Maybe in 50 years, you will have grandchildren and you will play the next Sonic games with them! Perhaps you will even say, "Hey, do you know about Sonic there? Wait, I'll show you." This is the kind of scene we'd like to see one day. ■



Screenshots from *Sonic Generations*.

# 2D GAMES







2D GAMES

# SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

ソニック・ザ・ヘッジホッグ

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** Genesis | **Japan release:** July 26, 1991 | **US release:** June 23, 1991 | **Europe release:** June 23, 1991 | **Number of players:** 1



Twenty years! It has already been two decades since the most famous hedgehog of all time made his first appearance on the Genesis. Twenty years of colorful adventures during which he defied the odds, from the difficult transition from 2D to 3D, to his arrival on Nintendo consoles. Indeed, in 2008, he joined hands with his biggest rival: Mario. Sonic has definitely left an everlasting mark on video game history.



## HERE COMES A NEW CHALLENGER

After many years of hard work and some 13 million units sold throughout the world, the SEGA Master System was replaced by the stunning Genesis. The revolutionary 16-bit console was equipped with the famous Motorola 68000 microprocessor which was used by SEGA for its most beloved arcade hits (such as *Shinobi*). More powerful and mature than its predecessor, it positioned SEGA as a formidable up-and-comer in the game industry and was the destined platform for the company's future hit: *Sonic The Hedgehog*. This ambitious project was scheduled to be a major showcase for the Haneda company, both on a technical level and in terms of redefining SEGA's image.

In 1991, when Sonic Team unveiled their new creation, the whole world discovered not only a new hero, but also a very fast game with incredibly fluid animation – something unheard of in platform games up to that point, even on the latest high-tech arcade systems! This feat was made possible thanks to the genius of Yuji Naka, who managed to create a miracle algorithm that made the game's extremely fast scrolling possible. This was exactly what SEGA needed to throw their rivals into a panic, because even though Mario still had something more in terms of depth and longevity, SEGA had the technical advantage with Sonic. Furthermore, Sonic's distinctive gameplay required just one button – used for jumping – and that was it. With the release of *Sonic The Hedgehog*, SEGA and Sonic Team had unknowingly made history...



## It's all about the logo

You do not have to look very far to learn about the origins of *Sonic The Hedgehog*'s logo. People within SEGA made several attempts at creating a logo, but we have to admit that the final version takes several graphical elements from the logos of *Alex Kidd: The Lost Stars* (SEGA System 16, 1986) and *Wonder Boy III: Monster Lair* (arcade, 1988). From these came the idea for the ribbon, the ring, and the stars, allowing SEGA to finish the logo off with its own touch.



## Zones



GREEN HILL ZONE



MARBLE ZONE



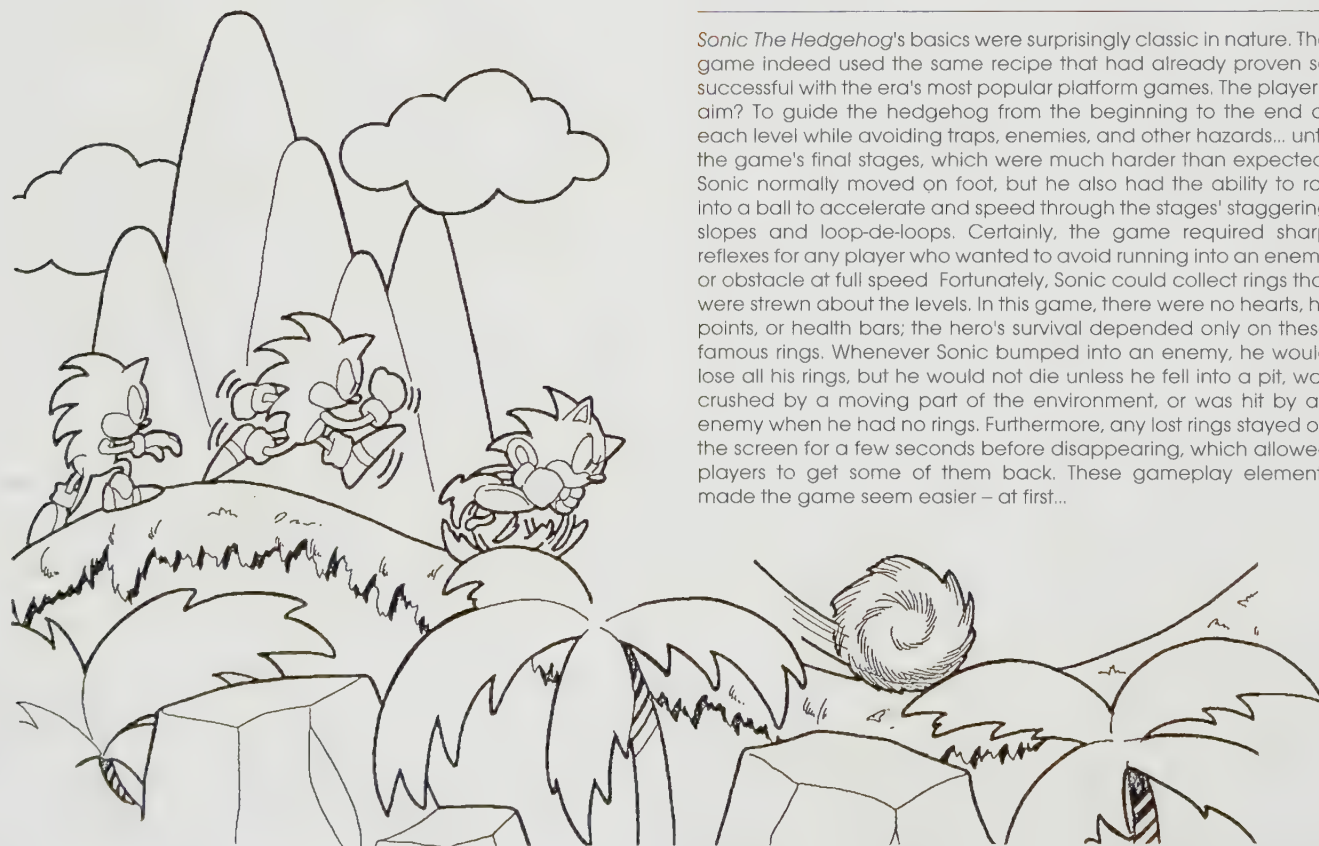
SPRING YARD ZONE



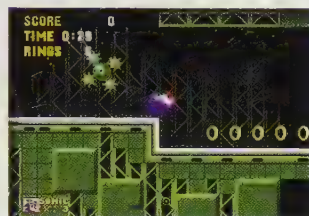
LABYRINTH ZONE

## SPEED UP

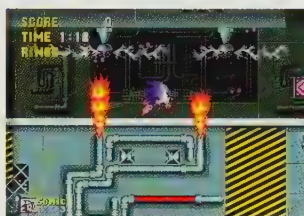
*Sonic The Hedgehog's* basics were surprisingly classic in nature. The game indeed used the same recipe that had already proven so successful with the era's most popular platform games. The player's aim? To guide the hedgehog from the beginning to the end of each level while avoiding traps, enemies, and other hazards... until the game's final stages, which were much harder than expected. Sonic normally moved on foot, but he also had the ability to roll into a ball to accelerate and speed through the stages' staggering slopes and loop-de-loops. Certainly, the game required sharp reflexes for any player who wanted to avoid running into an enemy or obstacle at full speed. Fortunately, Sonic could collect rings that were strewn about the levels. In this game, there were no hearts, hit points, or health bars; the hero's survival depended only on these famous rings. Whenever Sonic bumped into an enemy, he would lose all his rings, but he would not die unless he fell into a pit, was crushed by a moving part of the environment, or was hit by an enemy when he had no rings. Furthermore, any lost rings stayed on the screen for a few seconds before disappearing, which allowed players to get some of them back. These gameplay elements made the game seem easier – at first...



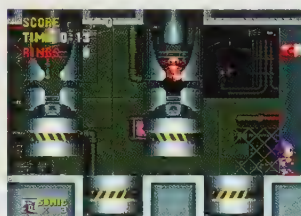




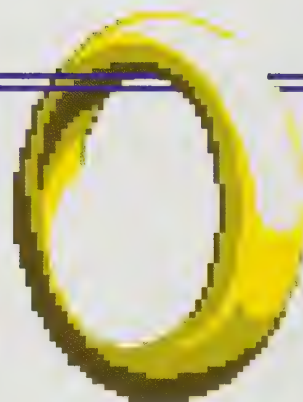
STAR LIGHT ZONE



SCRAP BRAIN ZONE



FINAL ZONE



## THE RISE OF ROBOTNIK

Traditionally, the hero inevitably has to fight the villain, and Sonic is no exception in this regard. Sonic's archenemy is Dr. Robotnik (Dr. Eggman in Japan), a brilliant mad scientist who dreams of ruling the world. To achieve his dark plans, he captures innocent animals and turns them into evil robots. Only the bravest of heroes would dare to oppose such a madman. Yet not all of Robotnik's inventions are dangerous. Take, for instance, the monitors placed in the levels, which contain many precious items: extra lives, invincibility, speed shoes, rings, etc. The most useful ones are cleverly hidden, and in-depth exploration of the zones is necessary to find them. In that respect, *Sonic The Hedgehog* could be played in two different ways: players could speed through the levels as quickly as possible, or hunt down these useful items to make the going a little easier. Players who took the time to explore, though, were also rewarded with the discovery of huge, complex levels that contained multiple hidden paths, one of the game's most impressive characteristics.

## The items

Like any platformer worthy of the genre, *Sonic The Hedgehog* includes a number of items that can aid the hero. These items are kept in monitors that must be broken in order for players to access them.



**SUPER RING**  
Ten extra rings.



**INVINCIBILITY**  
Sonic is surrounded by stars and becomes temporarily invulnerable.



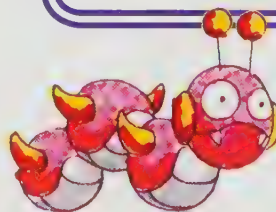
**SHIELD**  
Protects Sonic from damage once.



**1-UP**  
This icon, represented by Sonic's head, gives him one extra life.



**SPEED SHOES**  
These magical sneakers allow Sonic to run even faster than he normally can.



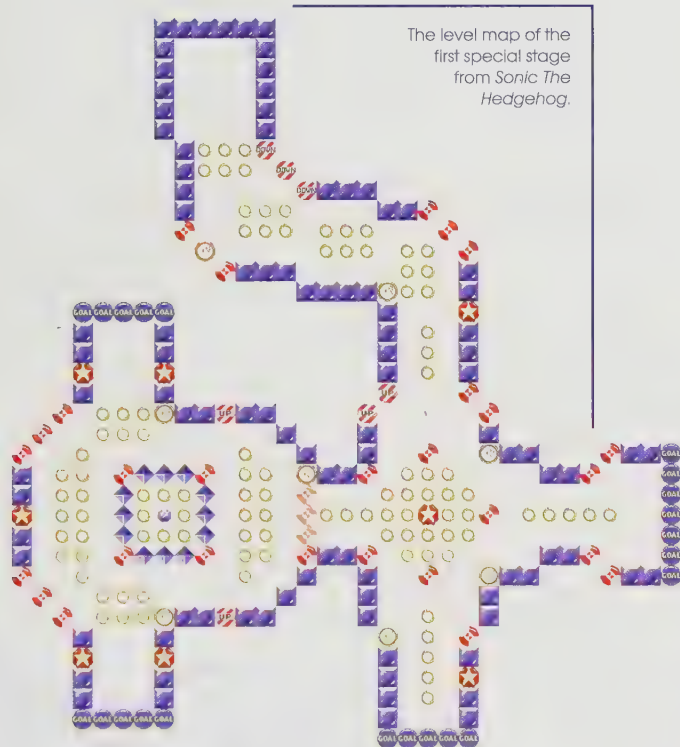
## SEGA: Welcome to the next level

It is impossible to forget the famous voice that sang "SEGA" at the start of *Sonic The Hedgehog*. Engraved in players' memories, it was not supposed to be included in the game at first. As it turns out, Sonic Team realized at the end of Sonic's development that there was some memory left in the cartridge. With no time left, however, they were not able to add any new game elements, so they decided to implement the voice that had already been used in Master System advertisements.

# SEGA™



The level map of the first special stage from *Sonic The Hedgehog*.



## A ROTATING WORLD

Of course, the temptation to race through the exciting levels at full speed could be felt at all times, but let us not forget another compelling game element that encouraged players to slow down. Indeed, the rings were not just there to prevent Sonic from dying; if players managed to complete a level with more than 50 rings in their possession, a huge ring appeared above the goalpost. Jumping through it sent the hero to one of the game's special stages, and these stages were wildly different from the rest of the game. These stages saw the hedgehog plunged into a rotating, pinball-like maze. While this concept already existed in Taito's arcade game *Cameltry*, it was completely new to consoles! The aim was to snag one of the famous Chaos Emeralds, of which there were six total (one in each special stage). The stakes were high because it was easy to fail, but once the hedgehog got them all, the game's true ending would be unlocked. It was quite something.







## THE BEGINNING OF A LEGACY

With this first game, Sonic Team really showed their skills – and it took only this one title for Sonic to become a gaming icon. Thanks to a huge marketing campaign and a technically impressive game, the new mascot became a star in just a few weeks. The game was a stroke of brilliance from SEGA, who had a powerful new weapon in its hands. The four million copies sold throughout the world can attest to that... ■



## Trivia

- You can access a secret stage select menu by entering the following code at the title screen: Up, Down, Left, Right, hold A, and press Start. To access a debug mode, enter this code at the title screen: Up, C, Down, C, Left, C, Right, C, hold A, and press Start.
- Yuji Naka had planned to include a sound test along with a special animation depicting Sonic with a band, as a tribute to the game's rejected scenario. Unfortunately, lack of time prevented it from being completed. With the remaining storage space on the cartridge, Naka instead decided to add the "SEGA" digitized voice that the player hears when they first turn on the console.

## Sonic The Hedgehog in arcades



Developed by SEGA Europe in 1989, the SEGA Mega-Tech system was based on the Genesis' architecture. It was equipped with cartridge ports that could hold eight games. About 50 titles from the 16-bit console's catalog were featured on the Mega-Tech, including a tweaked version of *Sonic The Hedgehog*. It was very similar to the original version of the game, but it was based on a credits system, which provided a certain amount of play time in exchange for coins. The Mega-Play system was created in 1992 and utilized the JAMMA standard. Unlike its predecessor, it only had four cartridge ports. On this system, Sonic's first adventure had some notable differences. For instance, the game only had four zones out of the original version's six: Green Hill Zone, Spring Yard Zone, Star Light Zone, and Scrap Brain Zone. The special stages also disappeared, and extra lives had no effect. Finally, each zone had to be completed within a given time, and the timer was reset if you failed.

# SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2

ソニック・ザ・ヘッジホッグ2

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** SEGA Technical Institute | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** Genesis | **Japan release:** November 21, 1992 | **US release:** November 24, 1992 | **Europe release:** November 24, 1992 | **Number of players:** 1-2



Only one year after the *Sonic The Hedgehog* craze, the blue blur returned to the Genesis. Expectations were high for the sequel, and this second episode definitely established Naoto Ôshima's character as a permanent gaming icon next to the likes of Mario.

In fact, *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* was able to transcend its predecessor and become one of the best 2D games in the series. Development

on the sequel began in the United States after Yuji Naka and Hirokazu Yasuhara left their native country for America and joined SEGA Technical Institute. Even though *Sonic 2* was not a huge technological leap over its predecessor, this new title took some key elements from its big brother – such as the fluidity of the scrolling and the mix between speed, action, and exploration – and improved them, correcting the few flaws that had prevented the first game from being perfect. *Sonic 2* brought four new, important additions to the series as well: Sonic's sidekick and best friend, Tails, a two-player mode, the new Spin Dash move, and the ability to transform into Super Sonic. The sequel also boasted more challenging platforming sequences, and was a more beautiful and colorful title overall.







## The story

The evil Dr. Robotnik was planning to cause an epic disaster on a worldwide scale, and he needed some help to further his scheme. His plan? Capture all the world's animals and turn them into robots that would help him build his ultimate weapon: the Death Egg. Always hungry for power, the malicious scientist already controlled several factories, refineries, and cities. Nothing was beyond his control... except the seven Chaos Emeralds! These legendary jewels had exceptional powers. If he were to obtain them, nothing would stand in the way of his plan for world domination. Only our blue hedgehog and his supersonic speed can beat him to the punch...

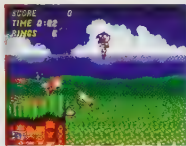
## THE LEGEND OF TAILS

Miles Prower, a brand new hero better known as Tails, made his big debut in *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*. Mario had Luigi, and now the hedgehog had a new two-tailed friend he could count on. Just as fast as Sonic (at least for now), Tails went head-to-head with his best friend in the game's new two-player mode. In the main game, Tails was controlled by the game's AI as he trailed behind Sonic and helped gather rings. However, a second player could jump in at any time and take control of Tails, even though the camera would only follow Sonic. Yuji Naka called this "1.5 player mode". He designed it with the idea of children playing with their big brothers. It came to him while he was watching kids play the original Sonic, and was added after the real two-player mode.

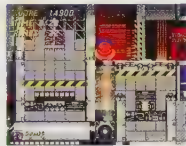
Below, sprite images from *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*'s famous second stage, Chemical Plant Zone.



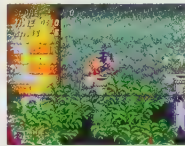
## Zones



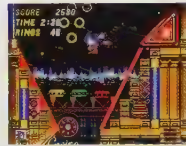
EMERALD HILL ZONE



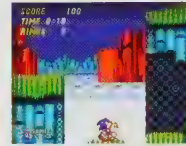
CHEMICAL PLANT ZONE



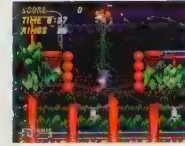
AQUATIC RUIN ZONE



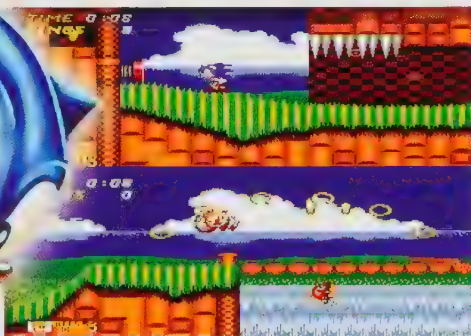
CASINO NIGHT ZONE



HILL TOP ZONE



MYSTIC CAVE ZONE



## TWO IS BETTER THAN ONE

This sequel's chief new gameplay feature was the two-player mode, which split the screen horizontally. One player would play as Sonic (top screen), and the other as Tails (bottom screen). The goal was not simply to be the first one to reach the end of the level. Indeed, players were scored across five different categories in each race: their finishing position (first or second), their overall score, the number of rings gathered during the race, the number of rings retained at the end of the race, and the number of items found during the race. This mode, originally designed by Yuji Naka to be included in the first game, unfortunately suffered from severe lag and squashed the picture considerably. Even though *Sonic 2* was unanimously praised by critics, there were a few cutting remarks aimed at this well-intentioned, but flawed two-player mode.

## The special stages

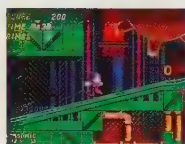


*Sonic The Hedgehog 2* was quite well-known for its 3D special stages. They were conceived by Yuji Naka, who loved the 3D rendering of Sonic from behind and was already thinking about a top-down view of the hedgehog in some kind of roller coaster. The developers were able to implement these stages by rendering them in a lower resolution. The result impressed everyone at the time! The only drawback was the absence of loop-de-loops, which the developers had intended to include in the special stages but, unfortunately, could not.





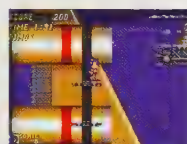
OIL OCEAN ZONE



METROPOLIS ZONE



SKY CHASE ZONE



WING FORTRESS ZONE



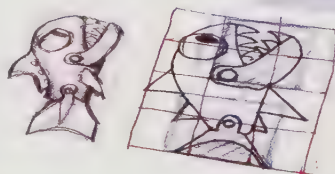
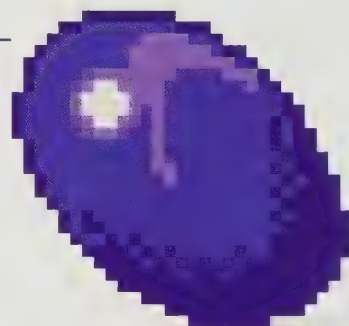
DEATH EGG ZONE



## THE SPIN DASH

Even though the release of *Sonic The Hedgehog* brought some freshness to the platformer genre, its gameplay suffered from a major flaw: it took Sonic way too much time to climb up a slope if he didn't have any momentum going. The arrival of the famous Spin Dash in *Sonic 2* definitely took care of this issue, though. The move was easy to do – simply press the jump button while holding down on the D-pad – and it launched Sonic forward in an instant burst of speed. This useful technique helped players rocket through the loop-de-loops and other slopes scattered throughout the game, and also reach new hidden checkpoints. These checkpoints were particularly important, as they were the only way to access *Sonic 2*'s special stages. When the player activated them with 50 or more rings in their possession, a small ring of light would appear. Jumping through this ring would then teleport Sonic to one of the game's 3D special stages, which were astoundingly fluid and realistic for their time. As in *Sonic 1*, passing these stages rewarded you with a Chaos Emerald.

Below, concept artwork of the Metropolis Zone level, along with sketches of some enemies.



## Knuckles in Sonic 2



Thanks to "lock-on" technology, it was possible to connect the *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* cartridge with the *Sonic & Knuckles* one. This allowed the player to rediscover *Sonic 2* as the powerful echidna, who had different abilities than Sonic and Tails. Knuckles was able to climb walls and glide for a few seconds, so it was possible – just like in *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* – to discover new, previously unreachable areas. However, other parts of the game – such as certain boss fights – became more difficult, since Knuckles could not jump as high as Sonic and Tails.

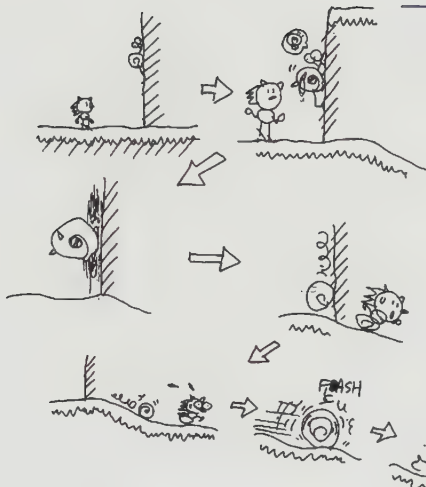
### A CHANGE IN COLORS!

Just like in *Sonic 1*, completing the special stages was required to discover *Sonic 2*'s true ending. This time, the special stages challenged players to collect a certain number of rings before passing each checkpoint, and reaching the end would earn the player a Chaos Emerald – of which there were now seven, not just six! Once the player had gathered

all of them, collecting 50 rings in any stage and jumping into the air would unleash... Super Sonic! In this golden form – which looked very similar to *Dragon Ball Z*'s Super Saiyans – Sonic became faster, jumped higher, and was almost invincible. He could still die by falling into a pit, drowning, or being crushed, though. Also, Sonic could only maintain his Super form for as long as he had rings, which slowly depleted over time. Once he ran out of rings, Sonic went back to normal.







On the left, concept artwork of a scene showing Sonic encountering a snail-like enemy.

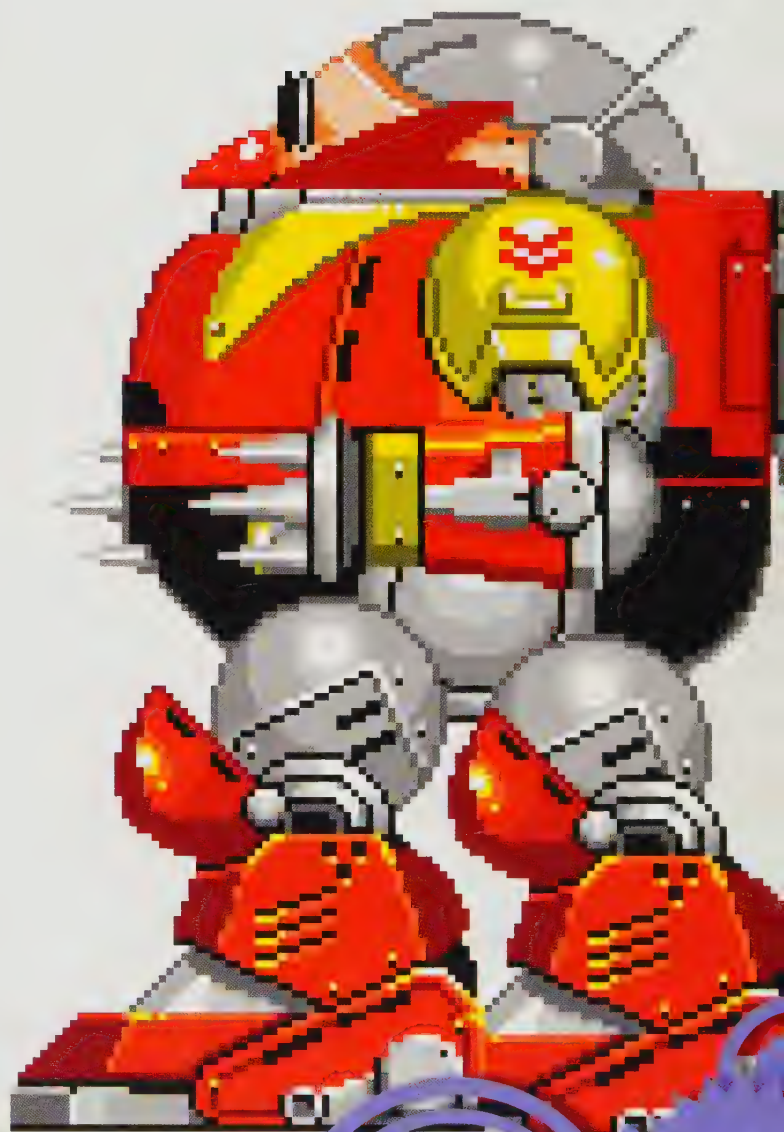
Below, the different stages of Sonic's transformation into Super Sonic, and Sonic 2's final boss, the Death Egg Robot.

## AT THE HEIGHT OF GLORY

With its two-player mode, colorful levels (Aquatic Ruin Zone was gorgeous), the arrival of Tails, and the appearance of Super Sonic, this sequel would forever be engraved in the hearts of fans. Critically acclaimed, it allowed SEGA to catch up with Nintendo, especially in Europe and the United States. Nearly six million copies were sold, placing Sonic at the height of glory. *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* received the award for Best Genesis Game of 1992 in the magazine *Electronic Gaming Monthly*, and, in the year 2000, ranked 61st in *Game Informer's* "Top 100 Games of All Time" chart. Impressive feats... ■

## Trivia

- Yuji Naka's birthday was used as the level select code in *Sonic 2*, which required players to go to the Sound Test mode and play sounds 19, 65, 9, and 17.
- The game's release in Europe and North America took place on Tuesday, November 24, 1992, and was promoted as "Sonic 2's day". ("Sonic Tuesday" – clever!)



# SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 3

ソニック・ザ・ヘッジホッグ3

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** Genesis | **Japan release:** May 27, 1994 | **US release:** February 2, 1994 | **Europe release:** February 24, 1994 | **Number of players:** 1-2

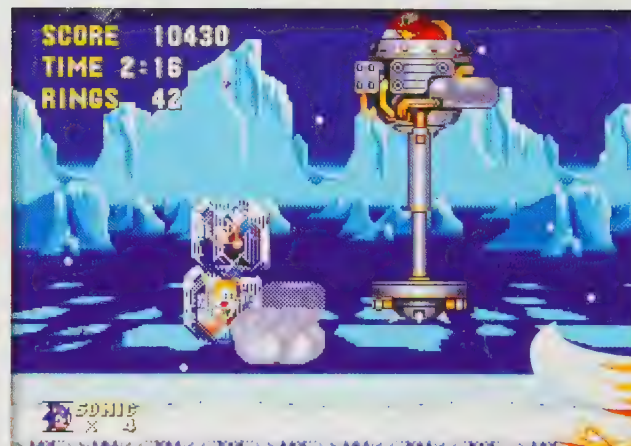


It was 1994, nearly two years after the *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* craze on the Genesis. Perfect in every detail, this second title had left an indelible impression on players. In a very short period of time, Sonic had become the icon of a whole generation. The fans' expectations were therefore bigger than ever! Yet on the day of *Sonic The Hedgehog 3*'s U.S. release – February 2, 1994 – fans were surprised and shocked to see a strange new character posing alongside their hero. His name was Knuckles. This spiky rodent was an echidna, and his goal was to be the talk of the town! He had quite a spirited debut. Working for Eggman, who lied to him about Sonic's real motives, this guy was strong, athletic, and versatile – he could even glide through the air. He appeared many times throughout *Sonic 3* and would go on to become a series mainstay.

## The story

This time, Sonic's adventures took him to a mysterious floating island with a precious power source: the Master Emerald. In the previous game, Sonic and his faithful companion Tails thought they had destroyed Dr. Robotnik's flying fortress, the Death Egg. But as it turns out, Robotnik had managed to make an emergency landing on the floating island. Once he learned that it was because of the Chaos Emeralds that the island was able to stay afloat, the diabolical scientist decided to collect the precious stones in order to repair his ship. To help facilitate his task, Robotnik managed to deceive Knuckles, a native of the island and the Master Emerald's keeper, about Sonic's real identity and motives...

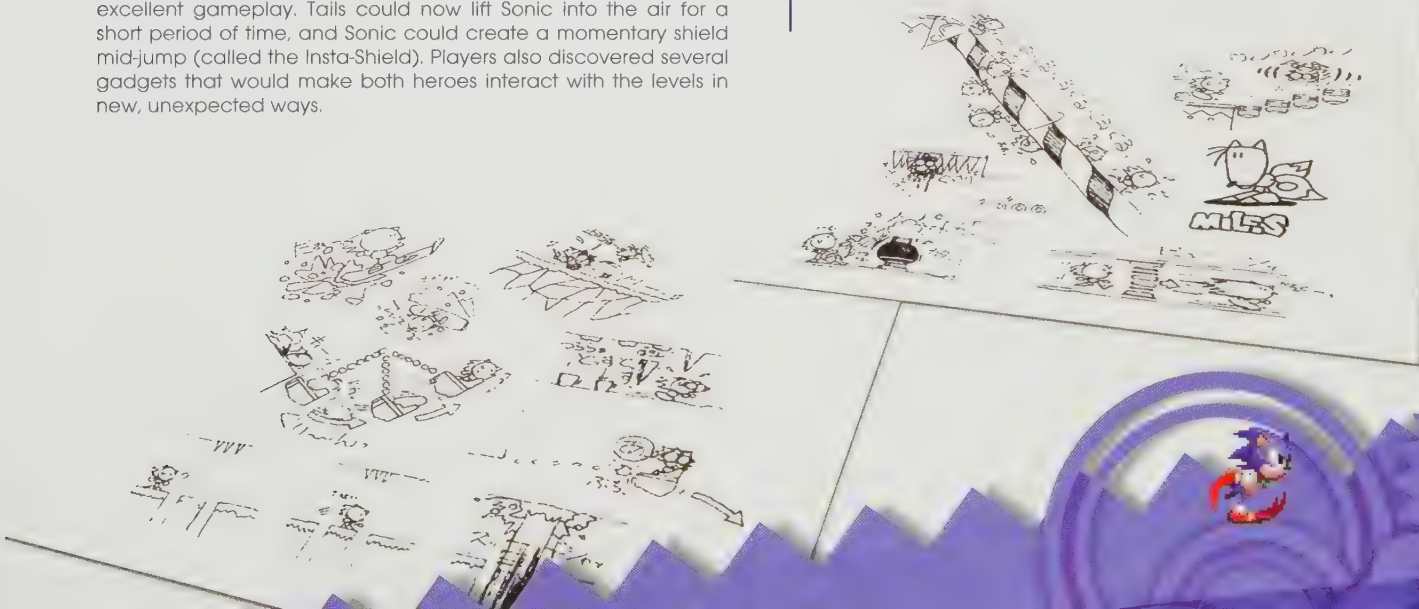
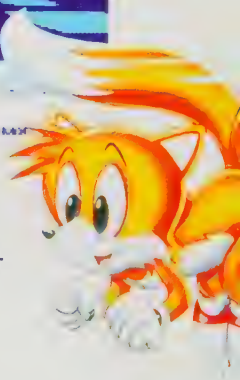




## WITH GREAT FINESSE

Many experts consider this game to be the best of the series' 2D titles, and yet *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* looked a lot like its predecessor. Players nearly felt a sense of déjà-vu during the very first moments of the game: Sonic used his Spin Dash again, Tails teamed up with his friend to thwart Robotnik, and it was still possible for two players to play together. However, if the game's fundamental mechanisms remained unchanged, many subtle tweaks enhanced the already-excellent gameplay. Tails could now lift Sonic into the air for a short period of time, and Sonic could create a momentary shield mid-jump (called the Insta-Shield). Players also discovered several gadgets that would make both heroes interact with the levels in new, unexpected ways.

Concept artwork made during the development of *Sonic The Hedgehog 3*, drawn for the Carnival Night Zone and Icecap Zone levels.



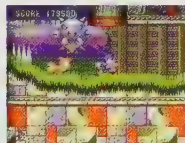
## Zones



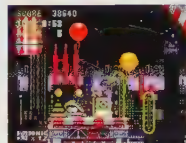
ANGEL ISLAND ZONE



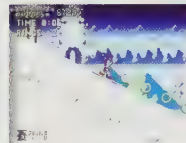
HYDRO CITY ZONE



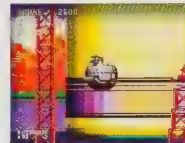
MARBLE GARDEN ZONE



CARNIVAL NIGHT ZONE



ICE CAP ZONE



LAUNCH BASE ZONE

## The special stages

Sonic 3's special stages were accessed by jumping through giant rings hidden in each act. This time, the stages took place on an impressive, huge 3D sphere on which the characters ran. The effect was really striking! Strewed about the sphere were blue and red balls. The aim was to collect the former and avoid the latter to win a Chaos Emerald. Once all seven Chaos Emeralds were in Sonic's possession, he could transform into Super Sonic and discover the game's true ending.



There were other changes as well, and little touches here and there. The levels were bigger, deeper, and had more hidden areas. They were more refined in terms of graphics, with some outdoor sequences swarming with details. Alternating between dynamic and calm sequences gave the game a good rhythm. More than ever, *Sonic 3* pushed the Genesis to its limits, and simply playing and slowly mastering the game was a real pleasure.

This third episode also made an impression thanks to its unforgettable soundtrack. While the music for the first two games was composed by Masato Nakamura, this time the tunes were created by many musicians, including Brad Buxer (the king of the popular sound team), Darryl Ross, Geoff Grace, Bobby Brooks, and Doug Grisby III, as well as the Japanese musician Jun Senoue and the American composer Howard Drossin.







## Sonic Boom

To coincide with the release of *Sonic The Hedgehog 3*, many marketing campaigns were set up throughout the world. In the United States, the store Toys "R" Us decided to reward all pre-orders of the game by including a limited edition soundtrack CD entitled "Sonic The Hedgehog Boom!". Produced and composed by Spencer Nilsen, David J. Young, and Sterling, the album included remixed or long versions of songs from *Sonic CD* and *Sonic Spinball*. The disc, recorded with QSound technology, included 23 tracks for a total duration of almost 71 minutes.

## CRITICAL SUCCESS

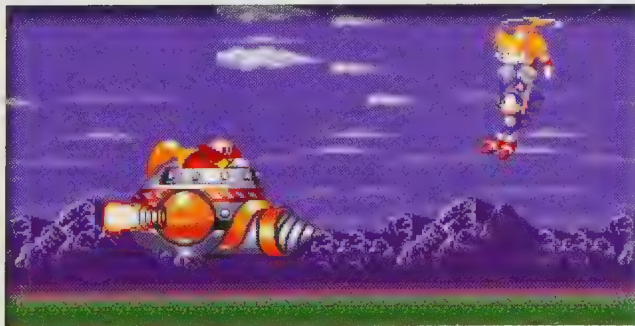
*Sonic The Hedgehog 3* was received tremendously well by the press and the players. In America, *Sonic 3*'s February 2, 1994 release date was christened "Hedgehog Day", in reference to Groundhog Day. SEGA set up many huge marketing campaigns, most notably with Toys "R" Us. In England, the game was promoted by the rock band Right Said Fred, who created a song with many references to Sonic that would be used in advertisements. However, despite these efforts and the game's excellent reviews, the game's sales – at nearly two million copies sold – paled in comparison to *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*'s six million copies. *Sonic 3* was an excellent game. It was technically immaculate and a real piece of art, maybe even the best 2D game ever! But everybody was already looking ahead to the amazing potential of the 32-bit consoles. ■



Artwork of enemies from *Sonic The Hedgehog 3*.

## Trivia

- Since he knew that *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* would be his last Genesis game, Yuji Naka asked the team to give it their all. A special compressing technique was even developed to add more detail to the game.
- In response to many player requests, *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* allowed players to save up to six different games.
- *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* was originally planned to be a 3D title. But the idea was dropped due to the amount of work and programming that the new engine would require.
- Competition Mode, which allowed two players to face each other via split-screen multiplayer, barely made it into the game. The decision to release *Sonic & Knuckles* as a separate game kept it in.



2D GAMES

# SONIC & KNUCKLES

ソニック&ナックルズ

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** Genesis | **Japan release:** October 18, 1994 | **US release:** October 17, 1994 | **Europe release:** October 19, 1994 | **Number of players:** 1-2



While everybody was expecting *Sonic The Hedgehog 4*, SEGA surprised everyone by launching *Sonic & Knuckles* within the same year that the third title had been released. This new title was programmed by Yuji Naka, while Hirokazu Yasuhara and Takashi Thomas Yuda were in charge of the game and character design, respectively. It was a direct sequel to *Sonic The Hedgehog 3*, in which players had been introduced to Knuckles the Echidna. The latter had now become a main character and also a playable one, just like the blue hedgehog. This game's big hook was shown right from the start, as the player got to choose between two different scenarios: one with Sonic, and one with Knuckles. Each had a different story and varying cutscenes, introducing a new narrative system that was a precursor to the future *Sonic Adventure* games.

Both heroes played very differently and explored the same levels in different ways. Knuckles could cling to walls and climb them. He could also glide. Both moves allowed him to explore areas that were unreachable for Sonic, giving him his own routes through the levels. Knuckles could also race through the stages at high speed and roll into a ball, just like Sonic. As for the azure hedgehog, he still had the same set of moves from *Sonic 3*, but he (and Knuckles) could also now make use of several new mechanisms, like pulleys, which allowed the player to reach new heights by alternately pressing up and down on the D-pad. He could also cling to balloons that brought him to different parts of a level, or grab bars to propel himself forward with the strength of his arms. In short, he was an accomplished acrobat.





But the most astonishing innovation was undoubtedly the presence of an extra port on top of the *Sonic & Knuckles* cartridge. This unique function, which SEGA called "lock-on technology", allowed players to connect their *Sonic 3*, *Sonic 2*, or *Sonic 1* cartridge to *Sonic & Knuckles* to unlock new content and features! ■



## Trivia

- At first, *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* was supposed to fit, after compression, on a 34-megabit cartridge and contain all the elements of *Sonic & Knuckles*.
- By collecting the seven Chaos Emeralds as well as the seven Super Emeralds throughout *Sonic 3 & Knuckles*, Sonic could transform into Hyper Sonic, enabling him to destroy all nearby enemies in a screen-clearing flash!
- By connecting *Sonic 1* to *Sonic & Knuckles*, you got to play many different, randomly-generated variations of *Sonic The Hedgehog 3*'s special stage – about 128,016,000 of them, in fact! If you connected any non-*Sonic Genesis* game, you could play even more stages.



# SONIC THE HEDGEHOG CD

ソニック・ザ・ヘッジホッグ C D

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** SEGA | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** SEGA CD, PC | **Japan release:** September 23, 1993 (SEGA CD) / August 9, 1996 (PC) | **US release:** November 19, 1993 (SEGA CD) / September 26, 1996 (PC) | **Europe release:** October 1993 (SEGA CD) / October 3, 1996 (PC) | **Number of players:** 1

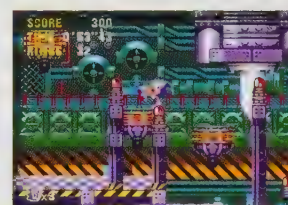


Developed in parallel with *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*, *Sonic CD* is the only SEGA CD title in the series. While the development of *Sonic 2* was assigned to the team at SEGA Technical Institute in the United States, it was the hedgehog's creator, Naoto Ōshima, who was in charge of this unique title. Even though he reused several of *Sonic 1*'s character sprites and other graphical elements in *Sonic CD*, this title was certainly its own unique experience. Each level could be explored in four different time periods: the past, the present, a good future, and a bad future. The same stage often had wildly different level structures, enemies, item locations, colors, and music depending on the time period.

Sonic's aim in this title was to change the future through the use of time travel. By destroying an enemy generator in the past version of a stage, our hero created a "good" future with relatively few enemies. Failing to do this, however, led to a "bad" future for that stage, where Robotnik's evil robots were everywhere, making the going much more difficult.

*Sonic CD* also featured excellent music, considered the best in the series by many fans. The game actually had two completely different soundtracks. One was especially punchy and techno-centric. Created by Naofumi Hataya and Masafumi Ogata, this soundtrack was only featured in the Japanese and European versions of the game. The other one, composed for the American version, was created by Spencer Nilsen and was featured in the PC version as well as in *Sonic Gems Collection*.

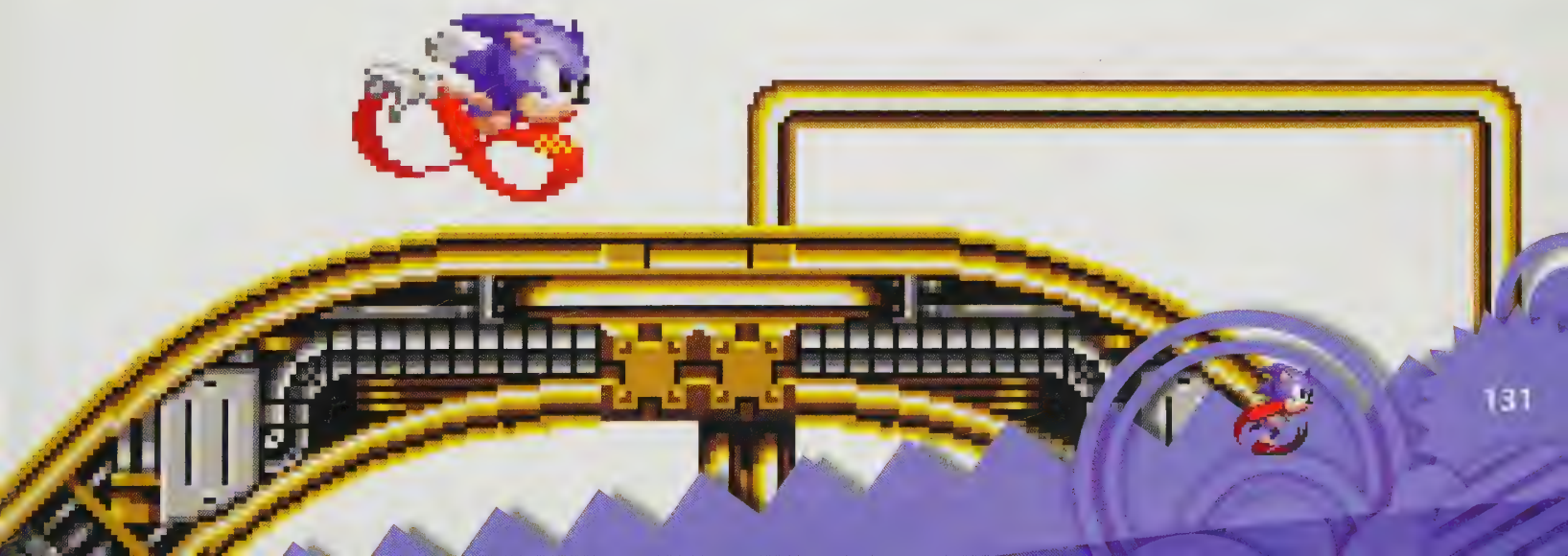




Thanks to the amount of storage space available, *Sonic CD* featured animated cutscenes, and Kenichi Ono, one of the game's designers, took advantage of this fact. The young man insisted on having the directors of the anime *Dragon Ball* supervise *Sonic CD*'s opening and ending animated cutscenes. No less than 5,000 frames were made by Toei Animation. While most cartoons usually ran at 12 frames per second, *Sonic CD* got as high as 30. For technical reasons, this number was lowered in the game, but the visual impact was still strong. ■

## Trivia

- It was possible to listen to part of the soundtrack by putting the game in a regular CD player.
- The names of the seven zones are all alliterations.
- In compilations that include *Sonic CD*, you can see the cutscenes running at 30 frames per second.



# SEGA SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

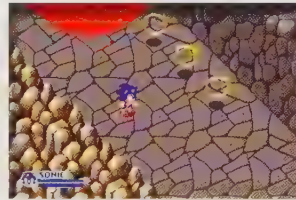
セガソニック・ザ・ヘッジホッグ

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** SEGA AM3 | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** Arcade | **Japan release:** June 1993  
**US release:** September 1993 | **Europe release:** September 1993 | **Number of players:** 1-3



Along with *Sonic CD*, *SEGA Sonic The Hedgehog* is among the games that were not developed by Sonic Team, but instead supervised by Sonic's designer, Naoto Ōshima. The team in charge of the project chose to use an isometric 3D environment, mostly to differentiate it from the console games. Using a trackball, a kind of inverted mouse, the gameplay relied mostly on reflexes and anticipation and was easy to understand, like any good arcade game. Only the perspective required a little getting used to.

With up to three simultaneous players supported in the "deluxe" version of the game, *SEGA Sonic's* main flaw was its difficulty. The last level was a real monster, and perfect playing was required to reach the well-deserved ending. Graphically, the game was superb, using all of SEGA's latest hardware refinements. *SEGA Sonic* used the best technology available at the time in arcades. The "System 32" could zoom in, animate huge objects, and manage a lot of scrolling. A limited release, *SEGA Sonic* is a real collector's item. ■



## Trivia

- *SEGA Sonic The Hedgehog* is the first game in the series where you can hear Sonic and his friends talk.
- Like in *Sonic CD*, all the levels' names in *SEGA Sonic* (except one in this case) are alliterations.
- Mighty the Armadillo and Ray the Flying Squirrel make their first (and in Ray's case, only) appearance in this game.



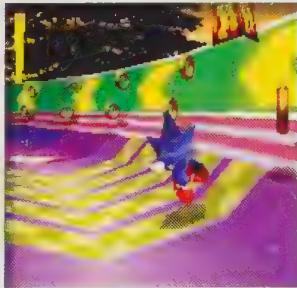
# SONIC 3D BLAST

ソニック3Dブラスト

**Japanese/European title:** *Sonic 3D: Flickies' Island* | **Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Traveller's Tales/Sonic Team | **Genre:** Platformer/Adventure | **Platform:** Genesis, Saturn, PC | **Japan release:** October 14, 1999 (Saturn) | **US release:** November 1996 (Genesis, Saturn) / September 1997 (PC) | **Europe release:** November 1996 (Genesis) / February 1997 (Saturn) / September 1997 (PC) | **Number of players:** 1



Developed in close collaboration with Sonic Team by the English studio Traveller's Tales, *Sonic 3D Blast* (or *Sonic 3D: Flickies' Island*, as it was known outside of North America) had a much different structure. The 3D element – or rather, "2.5D" element – came from the isometric perspective used in the game. The three-dimensional, maze-like levels adhered to the original games' tradition with their checkered aesthetics. In this game, Sonic fought to rescue the Flickies, who are cute little birds that first appeared in *Flicky*, SEGA's hit arcade game released in 1984. Depending on their color, Flickies acted differently toward Sonic, so different tactics were required to collect them all. Once they had been "picked up", the Flickies followed Sonic, who had to lead them to a Warp Ring. But if he so much as bumped into an enemy, they would scatter and our hero would have to retrieve them. To access the special stages and collect the Chaos Emeralds, Sonic had to locate Tails and Knuckles in the various stages and bring them at least 50 rings. ■



## Trivia

- *Sonic 3D Blast* was released only on the Saturn in Japan, nearly three years after the Saturn's release in the West.
- The Saturn version of *Sonic 3D Blast* was conceived in seven weeks to replace *Sonic X-Treme*, which had just been canceled.

# SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 4

ソニック・ザ・ヘッジホッグ4

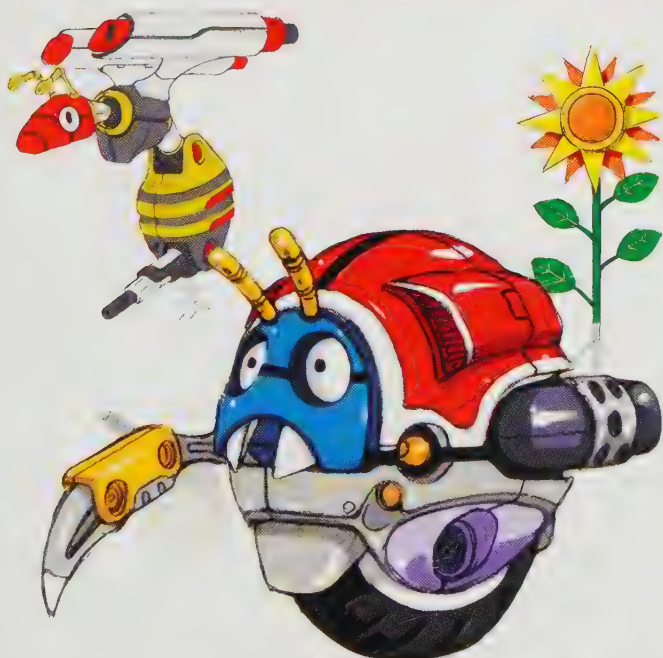
**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Dimps/Sonic Team | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** XBLA, PSN, WiiWare, iOS, Windows Phone 7 | **Japan release:** October 2010 | **US release:** October 2010 | **Europe release:** October 2010 | **Number of players:** 1



While *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* was released in 1994, *Sonic 4* wouldn't come until... 2010! It took 16 long years for the series to get another "classic" title. But despite having decidedly old-school gameplay, *Sonic 4* is quite modern in several ways, especially in its structure and method of distribution. *Sonic The Hedgehog 4* is a multiplatform episodic title, and the first episode is available on every major manufacturer's digital game platform: Nintendo's WiiWare, Sony's PlayStation Network, Microsoft's Xbox Live Arcade, and Apple's App Store, as well as phones running Windows 7. (The second episode is not available on WiiWare.) "It took a year to develop the game and its concept," Takashi Iizuka confessed. "Since it was a digital game, its price and the storage space required were very different from the usual commercial releases. We wanted to create a title with many references to the previous games and an accessible price, that used few resources in order to be easily downloadable."

Developed by Dimps under the supervision of Takashi Iizuka, the game was a direct follow-up to *Sonic & Knuckles*. In the first episode, Eggman/Robotnik returned to face a solitary Sonic, who had left his two friends to go explore new territories. The similarities it shared with the classic games were striking: the 2D, horizontal side-scrolling gameplay was still the same, as were the controls, and the old-school proceedings were enhanced by a couple of "new" techniques, such as the Homing Attack from Sonic's 3D games. Conceived to please old-school fans, *Sonic The Hedgehog 4* was a pleasant experience, even if it wasn't particularly original. ■





## Trivia

- *Episode I* includes four main zones, each divided into three regular acts and a boss act, all of which culminate in a final stage named "E.G.G. Station"
- *Sonic The Hedgehog 4* was originally named "Project Needlemouse" as a tribute to Naoto Ōshima.
- In the iOS version, Sonic starts dancing and takes out his iPhone after a few seconds of standing still.





# 3D GAMES







# SONIC ADVENTURE

ソニックアドベンチャー

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Action/Platformer | **Platform:** Dreamcast | **Japan release:** December 23, 1998 | **US release:** September 9, 1999 | **Europe release:** October 14, 1999 | **Number of players:** 1



After the cancellation of *Sonic X-Treme* on the Saturn in 1996, the project "Sonic Adventure" was given some serious consideration for release on SEGA's 32-bit console. After all, Takashi Iizuka confessed that the 3D "Sonic World" within *Sonic Jam* was regarded as a prototype of sorts for *Sonic Adventure*. But for technical reasons and due to a lack of time, the game finally ended up on the Dreamcast, SEGA's next-generation console released at the end of the 1990s. For the first time, Sonic had a full 3D adventure, just like his direct rival Mario's *Super Mario 64*. Also like his cap-wearing competitor, the hedgehog managed to unite players thanks to *Sonic Adventure*'s immersive universe, and so it was that, with this game, SEGA brilliantly overcame the difficult transition from 2D to 3D. Development on the game started in April 1997, with Iizuka leading a team of 30 members.





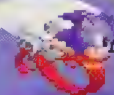
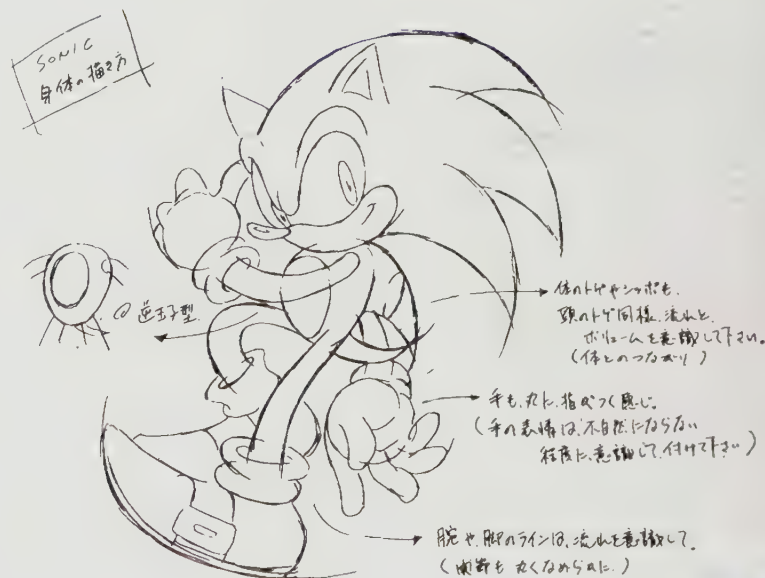


Sonic Adventure draws its inspiration from the gorgeous landscapes of South America.

## THE CHAOS THEORY

Sonic Adventure's story was centered around an ancient echidna civilization that existed several millennia ago. Tikal, the daughter of Chief Pachacamac, was living in harmony with the Chao, the protectors of the Master Emerald. These cute little creatures were themselves protected by a mysterious entity named Chaos. In his thirst for conquest, Pachacamac decided to use the Master Emerald's energy to further his war efforts. However, the peace-loving Tikal, knowing this could only end in tragedy, tried to intervene. Unfortunately, she was helpless and a terrible massacre ensued, with many Chao and several members of Tikal's tribe losing their lives. At the sight of this, Chaos unleashed his fury and turned into a fearful monster, destroying everything in his path. To prevent Chaos from going on a world-destroying rampage, Tikal sealed him – and herself – within the Master Emerald. Several millennia later, Dr. Eggman learns of Chaos and decides to wake him up, hoping to control him in a new bid for world domination...

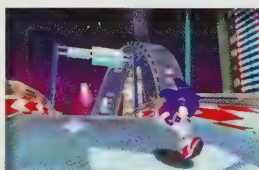
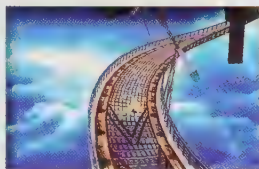
Development started  
in April 1997, with  
**Takashi Iizuka**  
leading a team of  
30 members.



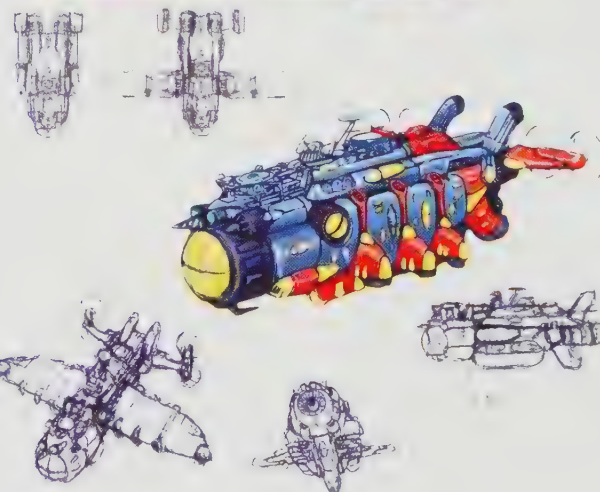
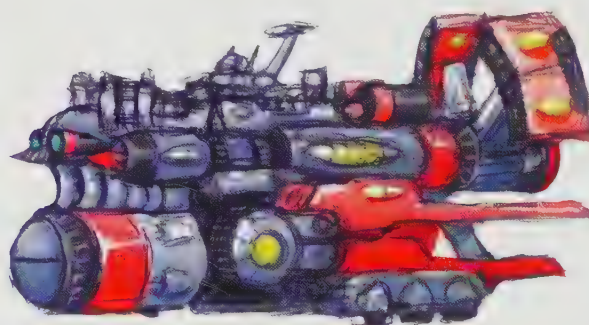
## Sonic Adventure DX

Anxious to present Sonic's very first 3D adventure to new players, SEGA re-released *Sonic Adventure* on the GameCube in June 2003, then on computers in 2004. Just like in the original title, Sonic and his friends fought against Dr. Eggman and his plans for world conquest. But this "DX" version, as it was called, included several new features. The disc offered 60 missions to attempt via the brand new "Mission Mode", and completing them – as well as gathering hidden emblems in the main game – would progressively unlock 12 of Sonic's Game Gear titles: *Sonic The Hedgehog*, *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*, *Sonic Chaos*, *Sonic Triple Trouble*, *Sonic Drift*, *Sonic Drift 2*, *Sonic Spinball*, *Sonic Labyrinth*, *Sonic Blast*, *Tails' Skypatrol*, *Tails' Adventure*, and *Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine*. This was enough to seduce fans who had already played the original *Adventure*.

However, some changes had to be made because of the absence of the Dreamcast's VMU. All the Chao-related content was redesigned, and new Chao mini-games could be played by connecting your Game Boy Advance to the game. Finally, in order to improve the game's fluidity, Sonic Team USA got the game running at 60 frames per second. Unfortunately, the game's 3D engine was unstable and caused too much lag. There were visual glitches as well, which further ruined the experience.

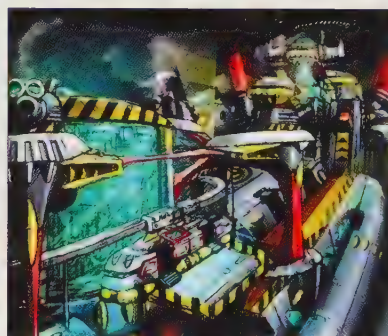
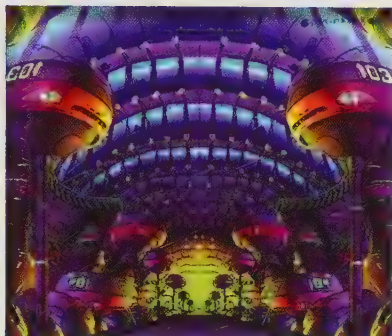


*Sonic Adventure* gave players the opportunity to control six characters: Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Big, and the robot E-102 Gamma. Each had their own adventure, abilities, and gameplay style. Just as compelling, though, was the fact that each character's story overlapped with the other characters' tales and formed a piece of the overarching narrative, which gave the game interesting depth. Gameplay-wise, Sonic relied on his speed and agility, and Tails had a spinning attack and the ability to fly. Knuckles, keeper of the Master Emerald, had to gather the emerald's fragments in intense exploration sequences. As for the rest, Amy used her Piko Piko Hammer to defeat enemies, E-102 Gamma blasted baddies with his weapons, and Big the Cat... did a lot of fishing. That's a lot of variety, and it made *Sonic Adventure* a compelling game.



Preparatory sketches used during the design of the Egg Carrier, Dr. Eggman's famous flying fortress.





Fast and furious, *Sonic Adventure*'s gameplay was extremely dynamic. However, the transition from 2D to 3D was not an easy one for the members of Sonic Team. They had to translate all the speed and fun of the 2D games into a 3D universe. This is why the camera often had to move and change, zooming and rotating constantly. While the Japanese version of the game had a few bugs and other issues, they were partially ironed out in the Western version, which was later released in Japan as *Sonic Adventure International* with additional content. At the time of its release, *Sonic Adventure* was a bombshell, and each new trailer seen on the Internet or on TV sent fans into a tizzy.

## SONIC ENTERS THE 'REAL WORLD'

In order to give the adventure more depth, Sonic Team created immersive new levels. Station Square acted as a hub that connected players to different areas, all of which then led to new levels. In order to help players progress through the game, Sonic Team also included a ball of light (which was actually Tikal's spirit) that acted as a guide and gave players hints as to where to go or what to do next. Players could also talk to the various people milling about Station Square and the Mystic Ruins. These NPCs (non-playable characters) gave the game's world a "lived-in" feel and brought some humanity to the story, which marked a real transition in the series. For the first time, Sonic had entered the "real" world and was standing side-by-side with human characters (other than Eggman).





As its title suggests, *Sonic Adventure* focused on some elements traditionally found in role-playing games, echoing Takashi Iizuka's initial wish to create an RPG. The beginning parts of the game were marked by the presence of several artifacts which, once inserted in their respective pedestals, gave players access to new areas. Specifically, this was the case with the Windy Valley and Ice Cap levels, the latter of which had actually returned from *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* for an encore appearance. Similarly, once players found an NPC's employee card, they could enter the exciting Speed Highway. Indeed, *Sonic Adventure* had plenty of environments to explore, as well as mini-games that were integrated into the levels.

For example, the Casinopolis level featured two pinball machines; one was dedicated to Sonic, and the other one was a tribute to the beloved Saturn title *NIGHTS into Dreams*. The aim was to collect as many rings as possible in order to create a pile of rings giant enough to be able to reach the Chaos Emerald that had been hidden away in the casino's vault. Another mini-game was a *Wipeout*-like game found in the Twinkle Park level, a night-time amusement park. Clearly, *Sonic Adventure* was full of fun, unique gameplay – players could even fly Sonic's famous two-seater plane, the Tornado!

The Tornado ran on Chaos Emerald energy, and Sonic and Tails often used it to quickly get from place to place. When Dr. Eggman appeared in his huge Egg Carrier, the hedgehog gave chase by pursuing him in the Tornado. *Sonic Adventure* included, as part of its main story, two sequences in the Tornado. Just like in *Panzer Dragoon*, the player was able to aim at and lock on to several enemies at once before firing. The whole sequence was rather exciting, and after encountering it in the story, players could go back to challenge their high scores whenever they wanted. A great idea

## Trivia

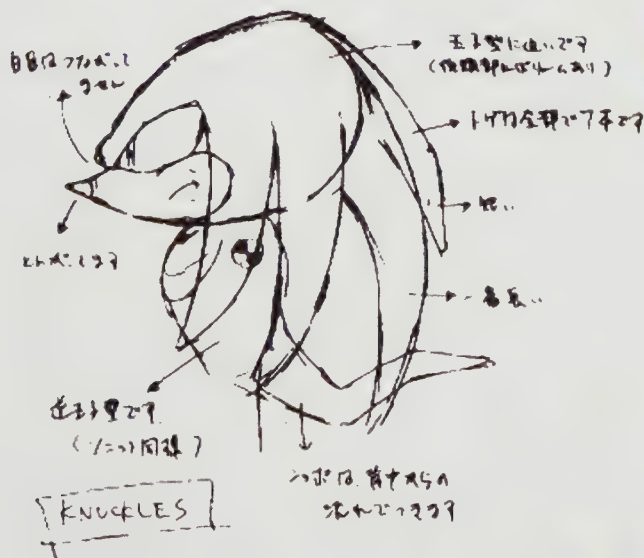
- You can find wallpapers on the *Sonic Adventure* disc if you insert it into your computer's CD-ROM drive.
- *Sonic Adventure* was the first game in the series to offer downloadable content.
- In the Casinopolis level, you can find showers in one of the areas. When you place Sonic under one of them, he starts washing his quills.
- *Sonic Adventure* was the first game where the hedgehog's mouth was animated, even showing his teeth.
- The Windy Valley level was initially a simple "test room" where developers could test the different behaviors of the characters.
- If you look closely, you can see that the boss E-105 Zeta is actually made of Dreamcasts.



## THE GARDEN OF EDEN

The Dreamcast, aside from being a technologically powerful console, had a very unique memory card that featured a monochrome screen and buttons. SEGA's idea was to provide unique opportunities for interaction between the player and the Dreamcast via the mini-games available on this Visual Memory Unit (VMU). In *Sonic Adventure*, the VMU gave you an additional way to interact with your Chao – Tamagotchi-like creatures that you could breed, raise, and help evolve. The Chao raising process began simply enough; when the player destroyed an enemy in one of the game's main stages, a small animal would be set free and it was possible to catch it. As the player collected more animals from destroyed enemies, they could visit one of the game's Chao Gardens and give these animals to one of their Chao. The Chao would then sometimes take on the abilities and physical characteristics of an animal it had been given. For instance, after receiving an aquatic animal, a Chao could become a swimming specialist. Raising Chao in this manner prepared them for the Chao Race, an optional event that was accessible at all times. This idea of having tiny creatures to raise and breed was an evolution of the "A-Life" system seen in *NiGHTS into Dreams*.

Below, concept artwork of Knuckles made during the development of *Sonic Adventure*.



Visually spectacular, *Sonic Adventure* also benefited from a very inspired soundtrack. The new generation of technology of which the Dreamcast was a part allowed for bigger, aurally richer soundtracks, which is why the main characters all had their own musical theme. The game's soundtrack ran the musical gamut, featuring rock, funk, and even some experimental themes. Directed by Jun Senoue, the soundtrack gave the whole adventure a powerful richness, and is beloved by fans to this day. The soundtrack even featured several vocal themes, which gave players the opportunity to hear talented performers like Marlon Saunders, Dread Fox, Ted Poley, Nikki Gregoroff, Tony Harnell, Karen Brake and, in particular, Johnny Gioeli, who would later join Jun Senoue to form the famous rock band Crush 40.

Magnificently created both in content and form, *Sonic Adventure* received unanimous praise from players and the press. With more than two and a half million copies sold throughout the world, including 1.27 million in the American market and 440,000 in Japan, it remains SEGA's best-selling Dreamcast game. ■



# SONIC ADVENTURE 2

ソニックアドベンチャー2

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team USA | **Genre:** Action/Platformer | **Platform:** Dreamcast | **Japan release:** June 23, 2001 | **US release:** June 18, 2001 | **Europe release:** June 23, 2001 | **Number of players:** 1-2



After having impressed fans with *Sonic Adventure* at the Dreamcast's launch, Sonic returned for the white console's swan song while celebrating his 10-year anniversary. With action, exploration, and shooting phases, *Sonic Adventure 2* was all about quantity, but that doesn't mean its quality suffered. Doing away with its predecessor's RPG-like elements, the game was intense and consistently maintained a frenzied pace, pushing the action to the limit. The risk taken in tweaking the gameplay like this could have backfired, but the creators really came through and delivered an excellent game. In order to keep the gameplay coherent and balanced as the player progressed through the game, Takashi Iizuka, Eitaro Toyoda, and Kazuyuki Hoshino split the various gameplay styles between the characters. Thus, the shooting sequences were dedicated to Tails and Dr. Eggman, Knuckles and Rouge were tasked with searching for the shards of the Master Emerald, while speedy, furious action was the name of the game for Sonic and Shadow. All in all, a spicy cocktail with exciting and explosive results, to be sure.







## Collector's edition

*Sonic Adventure 2* was released on the Dreamcast in June 2001, ten years after the blue hedgehog's first appearance in *Sonic The Hedgehog* for the Genesis. To celebrate the occasion, SEGA sold a beautiful collector's edition of the hedgehog's newest adventure called the *Sonic Adventure 2 Birthday Pack*. Sold only on the 23rd and 24th of June in Japan, it included the game, an 18-page booklet about Sonic's history, a commemorative medal, and an audio CD that included music selections from Sonic's first ten years of games (1991-2001).

## BLOOD BROTHERS

Unlike *Sonic Adventure*, this second episode had a scenario that put equal focus on the heroes and the villains. Progress was made by playing through both "sides", providing a certain "light vs. dark" dynamic to the whole game. There were six playable characters, divided into three pairs of two according to their style of gameplay (Sonic/Shadow, Tails/Dr. Eggman, and Knuckles/Rouge). In particular, Tails and Dr. Eggman stood out because, for their stages, they piloted a mech instead of traveling on foot. *Sonic Adventure 2* was less Japanese in concept than its predecessor, but the action remained fun and engaging throughout the adventure.

The story put the spotlight on Shadow, a black hedgehog who seemed to be Sonic's evil doppelgänger. As usual, Dr. Eggman wasn't entirely honest with this newcomer, compelling Shadow to regard Sonic as an enemy after the mad doctor fed him lies about the blue hedgehog and his motives.

The story put the  
spotlight on **Shadow**,  
a black hedgehog who  
seemed to be Sonic's  
**evil**  
doppelgänger.



## Sonic Adventure 2 Battle

A Sonic game on a Nintendo console? Who would have thought? But it became a reality with *Sonic Adventure 2 Battle* on the GameCube. In this re-release of the fantastic Dreamcast game, released at the end of 2001 in Japan and during the first half of 2002 in the West, everything that made the original game such a success is perfectly intact. Though its graphics were left mostly untouched, Sonic Team jumped at the chance to offer new gameplay features. This was precisely the case with the game's multiplayer "Battle Mode", which was expanded with new options and features. The game's Chao-raising elements were also updated with the ability to transfer the adorable creatures from the GameCube to the Game Boy Advance via the games *Sonic Advance*, *Sonic Advance 2*, and *Sonic Pinball Party*. With more than one and a half million copies sold in the American market alone, *Sonic Adventure 2 Battle* set the charts ablaze as one of the most popular titles for the GameCube.



## MADE IN THE USA

Whether it was the first stage's San Francisco-inspired backdrop or the game's general atmosphere (the open world adventuring was removed and instead, players advanced through the game one level at a time), it quickly became apparent that *Sonic Adventure 2* was made on the other side of the Pacific. As mentioned before, the developers drew inspiration from the city of San Francisco, with its sloping streets and the famous Golden Gate Bridge. "Since Sonic Team USA had moved near San Francisco, we had the opportunity to discover some superb landscapes," Takashi Iizuka said. "And we wanted to incorporate some of these elements in the game. Of course, the world in *Sonic Adventure 2* was entirely fictional and the aim was never to make a simulation of San Francisco. But we were particularly inspired by what we had seen. We wanted the game to be more in touch with the American market, which is why it was developed there."



**Sonic Adventure 2** was developed in the **U.S.** and drew its inspiration from the city of **San Francisco.**

Artwork created for Sonic's tenth anniversary. You can find it in the booklet included in the *Sonic Adventure 2 Birthday Pack*.





Sonic racing through the Green Forest level.

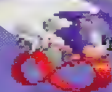
## PRODUCTION AT ITS FINEST

Though *Sonic Adventure 2*'s graphics did not represent a generational leap forward like its predecessor's had, this sequel was still a technological showcase worthy of the Dreamcast's capabilities. No matter how many enemies were on-screen, the game did not lag and, in fact, boasted the best animation possible. "We wanted the game to run at 60 frames per second and we designed the levels so as to enhance the feeling of speed," Takashi Iizuka said. Even if the game's American-style design wasn't universally popular, the beauty of the game's colorful levels was universally appreciated. Other than the scenario's unique hero side/dark side approach, *Sonic Adventure 2*'s chief innovation was undeniably its multiplayer mode, allowing anyone with a friend on hand to get even more enjoyment out of the game by playing together.

Universally praised upon its release, *Sonic Adventure 2* is still considered today to be one of the best 3D games in the series. ■

## Trivia

- By collecting all 180 emblems in the game, players could unlock a secret level that made quite an impression on the hedgehog's long-time fans. It was a 3D remake of Green Hill Zone, the legendary first level from *Sonic The Hedgehog*.
- At first, Shadow was supposed to die in *Sonic Adventure 2*. But the character was so popular that he made his return two years later in *Sonic Heroes*.



# SONIC HEROES

ソニック ヒーローズ

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Action/Platformer | **Platform:** GameCube, Xbox, PlayStation 2, PC | **Japan release:** December 30, 2003 (GCN, Xbox, PS2) / December 9, 2004 (PC) | **US release:** January 5, 2004 (GCN) / January 27, 2004 (Xbox, PS2) / November 17, 2004 (PC) | **Europe release:** February 6, 2004 (GCN, Xbox, PS2) / November 26, 2004 (PC) | **Number of players:** 1-2



After two immensely successful *Sonic Adventure* titles, the creative minds on Sonic Team started working on a new 3D Sonic game. But this wasn't another *Adventure* title: Takashi Iizuka, Eitaro Toyoda, and Kazuyuki Hoshino decided on new, platformer-like gameplay. For the first time, the player could control a "team" of three characters at the same time. There were four teams available to choose from, and each one had their own scenario: "The different stories do not have an influence on each other," Iizuka said during an interview for the official *Sonic Heroes* website. "Our aim was for players of all levels to have fun with the team of their choice and to give them the feeling of living a full adventure. Beginners should start the game with Team Rose, while experts should choose Team Dark."

Each team had three different possible formations depending on the team's current leader, who could be swapped on the fly. When a "Speed" character (like Sonic) was the team leader, the gameplay was fast and furious with Spin Dashes and Homing Attacks; when a "Power" character (Knuckles, for instance) took charge, stronger enemies could be toppled and obstacles could be destroyed; and when a "Flight" character (for example, Tails) took the helm, the team could fly and more easily deal with airborne enemies. Each character could also become more powerful by grabbing power-up items throughout the levels. *Sonic Heroes* also saw the glorious 3D debut of the series' famous special stages. All in all, the game was quite refreshing. ■

## Trivia

- *Sonic Heroes* was the first game in the series to be released on several consoles almost simultaneously.
- The release date of *Sonic Heroes* marked Sonic's 12th anniversary.



## Three platforms or nothing

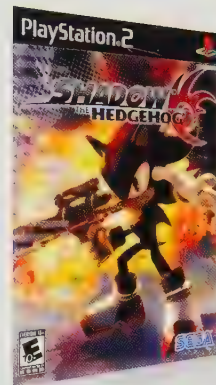
*Sonic Heroes* was the first Sonic game to use an externally-developed 3D engine. By using RenderWare from Criterion Software, Sonic Team was able to easily adapt the game to every major platform at the time. According to Yuji Naka, the biggest challenge was maintaining the representation of Sonic's speed. "The Sonic series' trademarks are speed and the size of the environments. Porting these concepts to different platforms is a complicated task. And this challenge is even harder when it has to be done on three machines at the same time, especially since we had very little experience with the PlayStation 2 and the Xbox."



# SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG

シャドウ・ザ・ヘッジホッグ

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Action/Platformer | **Platform:** GameCube, Xbox, PlayStation 2 | **Japan release:** December 15, 2005 | **US release:** November 15, 2005 | **Europe release:** November 18, 2005 | **Number of players:** 1-2

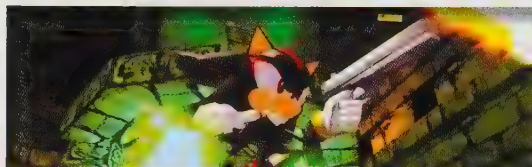


Shadow, who made his first appearance four years earlier with *Sonic Adventure 2*, quickly became one of the fans' favorite characters, rivaling even Sonic himself in terms of popularity. For Takashi Iizuka, who had been waiting for this, it was the ideal opportunity to unveil the black hedgehog's mysterious origins. According to Iizuka, the idea with *Shadow The Hedgehog* was to make a more adult Sonic game that was darker and able to attract a new audience. Inspiration came from moody, dark, and even post-apocalyptic movies like *The Terminator*, *Constantine*, and *Underworld*.

The game's first novelty was the presence of weapons. "In both *Sonic Adventures*, there had already been shooting sequences, but you did not move fast (during them)," Yuji Naka explained. "This time, we wanted to go even further and mix shooting and speed." There were 30 weapons of various types available in the game, including pistols, machine guns, alien armaments, and even close-combat gear. Needless to say, Sonic fans were in for quite a shock. "People talk about the weapons a lot," Iizuka pointed out. "But the most important part was what you did with them: whether you used them for good or evil." In *Shadow The Hedgehog*, you could do both.







Concept art: B.A. Soldier, Cemre Ozkurt, Blur Studio (2005)

In *Shadow The Hedgehog*, the way the story unfolded and the stages you played changed depending on your decisions and actions, and there were ten possible endings to discover. This game concept was initially supposed to be used in *Sonic Adventure 2*, but it was dropped because of a lack of time.

It worked like this. Each level had several objectives designated as "good", "neutral", or "bad", and which objectives you chose to accomplish determined how the story would play out. Though the player only had to go through six levels before reaching the end of the story, the game actually had 23 levels. Which ones you played (and in what order) was dependent on your actions, and in the end the game had a whopping 326 ways in which it could play out. Shadow himself was the perfect anti-hero, too; individualistic and multifaceted, the amnesiac hedgehog was ready to join any cause as long as it furthered his goal of finding out the truth about who he really was. In the end, Shadow could be led astray and even destroy the world, or learn the truth of his origins, come to terms with it, and save the world from Black Doom and his alien army. Either way, the most important part was that it was all up to the player. ■

## Trivia

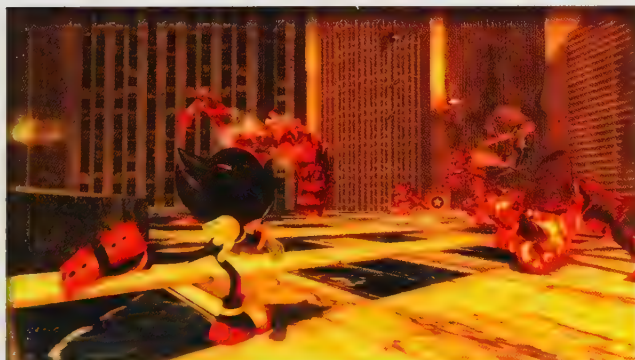
- To satisfy the new criteria set by the ESRB (Entertainment Software Rating Board) at the time, *Shadow The Hedgehog* had to receive a few edits: the aliens' blood became green and humans could no longer bleed at all. Also, the "bad" language the characters could use was limited to a few uses of "damn" and "hell" here and there, even though the game's dark, violent atmosphere suggested otherwise.
- The characters were voiced by the same actors who worked on the animated series *Sonic X*. This cast would later be replaced with the voice actors used in *Sonic Free Riders* and *Sonic Colors*.
- The end-level bosses Blue Falcon and Black Bull were named after the vehicles belonging to Captain Falcon and Black Shadow, two of the main characters in the *F-Zero* series. After all, SEGA had just developed the latest *F-Zero* game for Nintendo.



# SONIC THE HEDGEHOG (2006)

ソニック・ザ・ヘッジホッグ

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Action/Platformer | **Platform:** Xbox 360, PlayStation 3 | **Japan release:** December 21, 2006 (Xbox 360, PS3), | **US release:** November 14, 2006 (Xbox 360) / January 30, 2007 (PS3) | **Europe release:** November 24, 2006 (Xbox 360) / March 23, 2007 (PS3) | **Number of players:** 1-2



With the arrival of Sony and Microsoft's powerful next-generation consoles, SEGA decided to relaunch its most famous franchise. Indeed, thanks to the raw horsepower offered by the PS3 and Xbox 360, Sonic and his universe had never looked better. But aside from just the graphics (and an excellent soundtrack), Sonic Team focused on content by going back to basics and revisiting the hedgehog's roots. It was a perfect time to do that, too – this game marked Sonic's 15th anniversary, after all. The days of Sonic's Dreamcast adventures were over – with *Sonic the Hedgehog (2006)*, Sonic was back with his speed, his winding paths, his breathtaking bumpers, and, of course, his rings. He would definitely need those rings, too, as this tough game seriously tested players' reflexes and accuracy.

As for the cast, it was filled with colorful characters, starting with fan-favorite Shadow. There was also a newcomer in Silver the Hedgehog, an enigmatic individual who could travel through time. Finally, there was Dr. Eggman. Yes, Sonic would of course battle his old nemesis again, but now the world faced two even greater threats in Iblis, an incredibly powerful demon also known as the "Flames of Disaster", and Mephiles, an evil, scheming hedgehog who mysteriously looks much like Shadow. ■

## Trivia

- Lacey Chabert is an American voice-over actor who does the voice of Meg Griffin in *Family Guy*. She is a huge Sonic fan and agreed to be the voice of Princess Elise. This made her the first Hollywood actress to take part in a Sonic game
- At first, this game was also scheduled to be a launch title for the Wii, but because it was too difficult to port, the Wii exclusively received *Sonic and the Secret Rings* a couple months later.



# SONIC UNLEASHED

ソニックワールドアドベンチャー

**Japanese title:** *Sonic World Adventure* | **Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Action/Platformer | **Platform:** PlayStation 2, PlayStation 3, Wii, Xbox 360 | **Japan release:** December 18, 2008 (PS2, Wii) / February 19, 2009 (PS3, Xbox 360) | **US release:** November 18, 2008 (PS2, Wii) / November 20, 2008 (Xbox 360) / December 9, 2008 (PS3) | **Europe release:** November 28, 2008 (PS2, Wii, Xbox 360) / December 19, 2008 (PS3) | **Number of players:** 1



Sonic was in trouble. Dr. Eggman, his long-time nemesis, had gotten the best of him and used a giant laser beam to release a powerful beast called Dark Gaia from the center of the planet, breaking it into several pieces in the process. In the middle of this mess, our brave hedgehog also became afflicted with lycanthropy. During the day, he was his usual self, able to run anywhere at the speed of light; but at night, he became a slow and savage "werehog", prone to giving his enemies violent smackdowns. This twist provided two very different types of gameplay. During the daytime stages, Sonic raced through 2D/3D hybrid environments blindingly fast, with plenty of loop-de-loops and Sonic's signature acrobatics to keep things intense. During the nighttime stages, however, *Sonic Unleashed* suddenly turned into a beat-'em-up, with Sonic the Werehog punching, crushing, slapping, and generally bringing the pain to enemies with his massive arms. Throughout it all, players were treated to a fun world-spanning adventure in which Sonic, Tails, and newcomer Chip fought to put an end to Sonic's curse and save the world from Eggman and the mysterious Dark Gaia. ■



## Trivia

- As part of *Sonic Unleashed*'s development, Sonic Team started developing the Hedgehog Engine for the PS3 and Xbox 360 as soon as 2005. The Havok physics engine was also used in the game's creation.
- Originally, *Sonic Unleashed* was actually going to be *Sonic Adventure 3* before the game was changed to focus exclusively on the character of Sonic. This is the reason the game was named *Sonic World Adventure* in Japan.

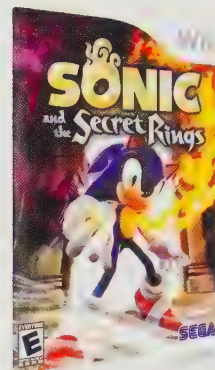


# SONIC

## AND THE SECRET RINGS

ソニックと秘密のリング

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Action/Platformer | **Platform:** Wii | **Japan release:** March 15, 2007 | **US release:** February 20, 2007 | **Europe release:** March 2, 2007 | **Number of players:** 1-2



With *Sonic and the Secret Rings*, the hedgehog returned to his roots in a game where he was alone, with speed as his only ally — something that hadn't happened since the original game in 1991! This game, however, almost didn't see the light of day. Sonic Team wanted to develop a game for the promising Wii, and they first thought about making a port of *Sonic The Hedgehog* (2006) for Nintendo's tiny console. But porting difficulties quickly caused the team to realize that it would actually take less time to create a whole new game for the Wii. The result was this completely original adventure, where the hedgehog became trapped in the world of the Arabian Nights and was forced to find the seven World Rings in order to defeat Erazor Djinn, an evil genie.

*Sonic and the Secret Rings* was created to take advantage of the Wii Remote motion controller. Yuji Naka explained that he had always had a game in mind where Sonic could run endlessly, and where the player would focus on jumps and lateral movements. This is exactly what the "Wiimote" could provide when it was held horizontally and turned like a wheel. "The game was (something) between an action and a racing game," said Yojiro Ogawa, the game's producer. "Which most Sonic games are in the end." ■

### Trivia

- The game was first announced under the name *Sonic Wild Fire* and was renamed *Sonic and the Secret Rings* at the last minute.
- Yojiro Ogawa, the game's producer, readily admits that he drew inspiration from *Prince of Persia*, which is one of his favorite games along with *Shadow of the Colossus* and *God of War*.





## Trivia

Some of *Sonic and the Secret Rings*' characters used to look quite different, as these preparatory drawings show. From left to right: Erazor Djinn's initial design, a concept sketch of King Solomon, and the original design of Shahra.



# SONIC AND THE BLACK KNIGHT

ソニックと暗黒の騎士

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Action/Platformer | **Platform:** Wii | **Japan release:** March 12, 2009 | **US release:** March 1, 2009 | **Europe release:** March 13, 2009 | **Number of players:** 1-4



Two years after saving the Arabian Nights, Sonic returned to the Wii to explore new legends. This time, he took on the myth of King Arthur, and once again, the game was designed to take full advantage of the Wii Remote's unique capabilities. The story begins when Merlina, the granddaughter of the original Merlin, summons Sonic to help free the realm from King Arthur, who has turned into the evil Black Knight after being possessed by an unknown evil. The Black Knight is assisted by Lancelot, Gawain, and Percival (who look like Shadow, Knuckles, and Blaze respectively), despite the fact that he is no longer the King Arthur they once served. After a turn of events involving Merlina, the player got the chance to play as all three Knights of the Round Table, with each one having their own special attacks and weapons.

Yes, weapons! Unlike *Sonic and the Secret Rings*, the hedgehog and his fellow knights were controlled with an analog stick this time because the Wii Remote now controlled their swords, which never left their sides. *Sonic and the Black Knight* allowed players to buy treasures from the kingdom's inhabitants and exchange them with friends online. This lively adventure was, according to producer Tetsu Katano, "mostly aimed at children." ■

## Trivia

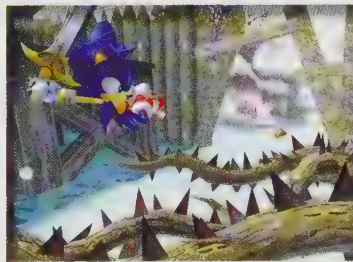
- Four years earlier, in *Shadow The Hedgehog*, Sonic stated that he would never use any weapons. Empty promise...
- In August 2008, SEGA asked fans to draw their favorite scene from the *Sonic* series. The 20 best pieces of fan art produced from this contest were included in the game.
- The game has an option that allows you to switch between the Japanese and English voice tracks.





## Face to Faith

The famous musician Jun Senoue, whose work has been heard on many Sonic soundtracks (*Sonic 3*, *Sonic 3D Blast*, *Sonic Adventure*, etc.) over the years, was back in business in 2009 with *Sonic and the Black Knight*. Aside from some Celtic remixes of familiar tunes, his rock band, Crush 40, recorded several vocal songs for the game, including its main theme, "Knight of the Wind". These songs were collected in an album entitled "Face to Faith: Sonic and the Black Knight Vocal Trax". Senoue was also involved in the production of the game's original soundtrack "Tales of Knighthood", alongside Richard Jacques, Howard Drossin, Tommy Tallarico, Yutaka Minobe, and Hikaru Tanimoto.



# SONIC COLORS

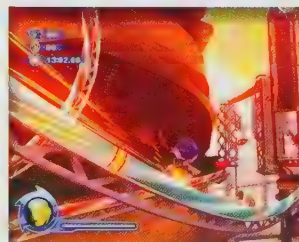
ソニック カラーズ

European title: *Sonic Colours* | Publisher: SEGA | Developer: Sonic Team/Dimps | Genre: Action/Platformer | Platform: Wii | Japan release: November 18, 2010 | US release: November 16, 2010 | Europe release: November 12, 2010 | Number of players: 1-2



*Sonic Colors* is the illegitimate son of *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™*. Hard to believe? Take a look at *Super Mario Galaxy's* colorful, space-based worlds and lively power-up items. Notice the resemblance? Takashi Iizuka, the head of Sonic Team, readily admitted, "Many people discovered the (Sonic) series with *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™*. These players from six to 12 were our main focus (with *Sonic Colors*). We wanted all Mario fans to like it."

The development of *Sonic Colors* started as soon as *Sonic and the Black Knight* was completed. Mario Kishimoto was still the lead designer. But this time, no more fairy tales. In a more classic scenario, Dr. Eggman – to make up for almost 20 years of villainy – had built a huge amusement park in space for the world to enjoy. Sensing he was up to something, Sonic and Tails quickly went to check it out and see what was up. They soon discovered that Dr. Eggman was trying to enslave a race of aliens called the Wisps. Just like *Sonic Unleashed's* daytime levels, *Colors'* stages provided a mix of 2D and 3D gameplay in an attempt to recreate the series' old-school platforming challenges. "We went back to the roots," Iizuka explained. "Speed, attitude, and immediate playability."







## Collector's edition

For the release of *Sonic Colours* in Europe, SEGA also launched a collector's edition of the game for the Wii and DS. Both bundles contained the game and a nice set of action figures, including a fully articulated Sonic and three Wisps. The Wisp figures included in the package were different depending on the version of *Sonic Colours* you purchased. The white, cyan, and orange Wisps were included with the Wii version, while the DS version came with the yellow, red and blue Wisps. These figures were created by the American company Jazwares.

The gameplay gimmick this time was the Wisps themselves, who were small, colorful aliens with strange powers. By collecting white Wisps, Sonic could fill a classic boost gauge that allowed him to tear through enemies and stages in a burst of speed. But best of all, there were other colored Wisps that granted Sonic unique powers. For example, the cyan Wisp turned Sonic into a laser that ricocheted off of walls and destroyed enemies, and the pink Wisp turned him into a spiked ball that could climb walls. When players discovered a new kind of Wisp, those Wisps would then start appearing in the rest of the game's levels, including the ones players had already beaten. This allowed players to revisit conquered areas and discover new paths and hidden items.

"Up until now, we were unable to give Sonic new moves while he was running," said Iizuka. "The Wisps were our way of offering new moves without sacrificing speed, and without using characters other than Sonic." Fans were pleased, and thanks to its simple, efficient, and fun gameplay, *Sonic Colors* quickly became one of the series' most beloved 3D titles for players of all ages. ■



## Trivia

- Tails had a PDA that could translate the Wisps' language into hexadecimal characters. At the end of the game, a code was displayed on the screen, which, once deciphered, read: "Thanks for saving us! If you can read this, you're a geek!"
- While Takashi Iizuka complained that previous Sonic games had often been too serious, that was not the case this time. Ken Pontac and Warren Graff, who had worked on the violent but funny *MadWorld*, wrote the script for *Sonic Colors*.
- Because "color" is spelled "colour" in British English, the game was renamed "*Sonic Colours*" in the United Kingdom.

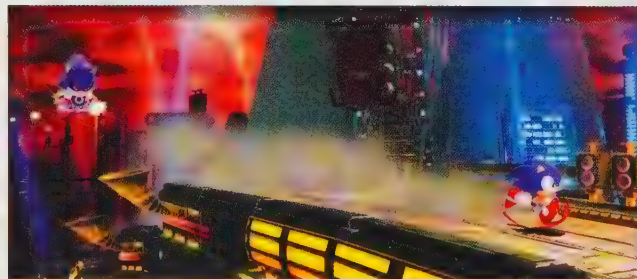
# SONIC GENERATIONS

ソニック ジェネレーションズ 白の時空

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Action/Platformer | **Platform:** PlayStation 3, Xbox 360, PC  
| **Japan release:** December 1, 2011 | **US release:** November 1, 2011 | **Europe release:** November 4, 2011 |  
**Number of players:** 1



Way back in 1991, when Sonic's three creators – Yuji Naka, Naoto Ōshima, and Hirokazu Yasuhara – developed the future video game icon, who among them could have predicted such a destiny for their creation? Sonic has become a cultural icon, even beyond the world of video games. Despite some fierce competition throughout his career, the azure hedgehog has managed to leave his mark and endure in players' hearts. Twenty years after he took his first steps in Green Hill Zone, here he is in an anniversary title. In this vibrant tribute, SEGA's mascot is faster and more aggressive than ever. The team had the firmly established goal of uniting gamers and Sonic fans of all ages with a first-rate production. Producer Takashi Iizuka was the one who got the ball rolling with this difficult challenge. "The idea was to compile 20 years of history into one game," Iizuka said. "We mixed some elements from the first 2D Sonic games and their unique gameplay with the modern innovations of the latest (Sonic) games. I think that both the players who had fun with the older titles and their horizontal scrolling and those who liked the 3D titles better will both find something to like (in *Sonic Generations*)."







## Collector's edition

To appropriately celebrate Sonic's 20th birthday, SEGA Europe decided to offer a collector's edition of *Sonic Generations* for the Xbox 360 and PS3. An immaculately prepared package for true fans, this edition includes – aside from the game itself and a voucher for the Casino Night Zone DLC – an exclusive figurine showing classic Sonic and modern Sonic posing next to one another, a "20 Years of Sonic" art book with exclusive illustrations and pictures, a soundtrack with music from throughout the series selected by Sonic Team, a documentary entitled "The History of Sonic: Birth of an Icon", and a numbered, commemorative model of the series' iconic gold ring.

The stroke of genius? Letting a new generation of players discover the old 2D levels in three dimension, and vice versa. "A 3D level like City Escape in *Sonic Adventure 2* can now be played in two dimension. On the other hand, the 'classic' levels of the first *Sonic* titles were entirely redesigned to be played in 3D on the Xbox 360 and PS3," said Mr. Iizuka. Sonic Team began working on the *Generations* concept as soon as the development of *Sonic Unleashed* was complete. The team made sure to follow the formula that made the original games so successful down to the letter, including classic Sonic's simple, accessible controls: one button to jump, another one to launch the Spin Dash, and a scrolling speed as breathtaking as ever! Classic Sonic's 2D stages truly capture the spirit of the original games while combining it with some of this generation's most beautiful, cutting edge graphics. As for modern Sonic's 3D levels, they provide more of the electrifying, exhilaratingly fast gameplay that fans grew to love in the daytime stages of *Sonic Unleashed* and in *Sonic Colors*, which was more refined than ever before in *Generations*. This allowed Sonic to dispatch enemies with his Homing Attack, run even faster, grind on rails, and pull off stylish aerial tricks to gain more boost power. In the end, Sonic Team's efforts paid off: *Sonic Generations* blew expectations out of the water and more than satisfied the differing wants and needs of several generations of fans. ■

## Trivia

- All of the "rival" characters that appear in *Sonic Generations* are playable in *Sonic Rivals*.
- The game was developed with the Hedgehog Engine, thus allowing the action to switch between 2D and 3D gameplay without any loading time.
- SEGA ran many polls both internally and among players to select the stages and music that would be included in the game.





# HANDHELD GAMES







## SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

ソニック・ザ・ヘッジホッグ

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Ancient | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** Master System, Game Gear | **Japan release:** December 28, 1991 (Game Gear) | **US release:** October 25, 1991 (Master System) / December 1991 (Game Gear) | **Europe release:** October 25, 1991 (Master System) / December 1991 (Game Gear) | **Number of players:** 1



Released a few months after the Genesis version, *Sonic The Hedgehog* on the Game Gear and Master System (AKA "8-bit Sonic") obviously suffered in comparison to the console version, which was a more colorful, more detailed, and faster Sonic.

Developed by Ancient (*Streets of Rage 2*, *The Story of Thor*, etc.) and programmed by Shinobu Hayashi, it was still a true technical feat, however, using everything the Game Gear and Master System had to offer. More than a simple 8-bit port, this was an entirely original game. The player could still find zones borrowed from the Genesis version, such as the Green Hill, Labyrinth, and Scrap Brain Zones,

but they could also guide the hedgehog through three brand new levels: Bridge Zone, with its crumbling bridges, the vertically-oriented Jungle Zone, and finally, the impossibly difficult final level, Sky Base Zone.

With only two acts and one boss in each zone, one might have feared that the game would be very short. Not a chance! This game was incredibly difficult – continues and extra lives were rare, and when Sonic got hit and lost his rings, they couldn't be recovered. No walk in the park by any means, "8-bit Sonic" tested players' skills on both the Game Gear and Master System. ■



### Trivia

- On the Game Gear, to compensate for the screen's tiny size, signs warned the player of upcoming jumps.
- The well-known Japanese composer Yuzo Koshiro, made famous for his work on the *Streets of Rage* series, worked on the music for this game.
- Yuzo Koshiro's sister, Ayano, also worked on "8-bit Sonic" as a graphic designer.
- The Game Gear version suffered from a lower screen resolution than the Master System version, but it offered a wider range of colors.
- The locations of the Chaos Emeralds were completely different between the Game Gear and Master System versions.
- The music in the Bridge Zone level was later remixed in *Sonic Adventure* for Tails' theme, "Believe in Myself".



# SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2

ソニック・ザ・ヘッジホッグ 2

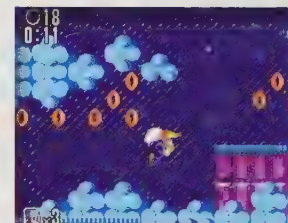
**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Aspect | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** Master System, Game Gear |  
**Japan release:** November 21, 1992 (Game Gear) | **US release:** November 17, 1992 (Game Gear) |  
**Europe release:** October 16, 1992 (Master System) / October 29, 1992 (Game Gear) | **Number of players:** 1



The task of creating the blue hedgehog's second 8-bit adventure was given to the developer, Aspect. Presided over by Kazuyuki Oikawa and Hiroyuki Saigusa, *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* on the Game Gear and Master System introduced us to Tails, the two-tailed fox, and Silver Sonic, an evil robotic version of the hedgehog built by Robotnik. This game was developed concurrently with the Genesis version of *Sonic 2*, though the 8-bit version was released a little earlier. However, the games are identical in name only; this game is different from its console counterpart from the very first level. While most Sonic titles begin in lush forests or on tropical islands, this game's first level, Under Ground Zone (sic), was a mine shaft that would not be out of place in an Indiana Jones film.

The rest of the game was similarly different; besides a compulsory detour through Green Hill Zone (here called "Green Hills Zone"), six of the seven zones were completely new. Another novelty was the various means of transportation available to Sonic, such as trolleys, giant air bubbles, and hang gliders. Overall, the game was excellent and it turned out to be at least as fast and dazzling as its Genesis counterpart, if not as colorful.

However, the Game Gear version of *Sonic 2* would later become infamous as the most difficult Sonic game ever made. This was due to the portable version's overuse of vertical scrolling, which made it difficult for players to confirm their surroundings and know whether or not it was safe to make certain jumps. ■



## Trivia

- The Master System version was only released in Europe and Brazil because the console was no longer being sold in Japan or the United States.
- Hackers have found unused items in the game's files, such as gray sneakers. We assume they would have slowed Sonic down.
- Though Tails proudly appeared next to Sonic on the title screen, he was only present in the opening and ending scenes, having been abducted by Robotnik in this title.
- The introduction sequence is longer on the Game Gear than on the Master System.
- Mecha Sea Lion, the boss of Aqua Lake Zone, did not move in the Game Gear version.
- The color of the water in the second act of Aqua Lake Zone was blue in the Game Gear version and green in the Master System version.

## SONIC THE HEDGEHOG CHAOS

ソニック&テイルス

**Japanese title:** *Sonic & Tails* | **Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Aspect | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** Master System, Game Gear | **Japan release:** November 19, 1993 (Game Gear) | **US release:** November 23, 1993 (Game Gear) | **Europe release:** October 25, 1993 (Master System) / November 1993 (Game Gear) | **Number of players:** 1



Produced by Steven Apour and launched in 1993 on the Game Gear and Master System, *Sonic Chaos* brought many of the features in the Genesis Sonic titles to the 8-bit machines. Indeed, this game allowed players to control Tails, use both the Spin Dash from the Genesis version of *Sonic 2* and the Super Peel Out from *Sonic CD*, and – unique to this title – ride a pogo stick and wear hover shoes. It was also the first time that a Sonic game's name was different on either side of the Pacific Ocean, as the game was called *Sonic & Tails* in Japan. But it was also a farewell title, because it would be the last Sonic platformer to be released for the old Master System in Europe. Admittedly, *Sonic Chaos* seemed a bit outdated at a time when everyone was anticipating the 32-bit Saturn.

As usual, *Sonic Chaos* was developed to be as similar as possible to the Genesis titles, so the developers at Aspect had to redesign Sonic's style, making him faster and more aggressive. But the game's good graphics and full use of the capabilities of the 8-bit machines came at a cost. The game wasn't nearly as fluid as its portable predecessor, *Sonic 2*, despite *Chaos'* bigger cartridge. Let us also not forget to mention how easy the game was, or the strange special stages in which Sonic teleported once he had gathered 100 rings, thus preventing the player from completing some levels. Thankfully, *Sonic Triple Trouble* would transcend this half-hearted title. ■

### Trivia

- Like Ryu and Ken in *Street Fighter II*, released a year earlier on consoles, Sonic could throw a "Hadouken". In order to do this, you had to go to the Sound Test menu and enter the famous combination down, down-forward, forward and a button, like in the famous fighting game.
- The Gigalopolis Zone level became "Gigapolis" in the U.S. and European versions to prevent younger Western players from mistakenly saying "Gigolopolis".
- The Master System and Game Gear versions were slightly different, starting with variations in the character select screen, the title screen, and the background in Mecha Green Hill Zone, which was orange on the portable and green on the home console. We should also mention some noticeable differences in terms of difficulty. The Game Gear title was much harder because of the smaller screen, which made it difficult to see. Finally, some music was entirely remade (Gigapolis Zone) or remixed (Aqua Planet Zone) for the portable version.
- This was the first game to reveal Sonic's exact running speed, with a speedometer at the end of each stage. *Sonic Labyrinth* and *Sonic Unleashed* would be the only other titles in the series to include this.





# SONIC THE HEDGEHOG TRIPLE TROUBLE

ソニック&テイルス2

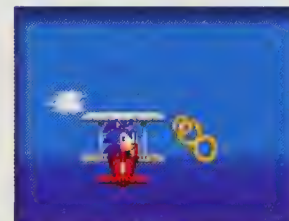
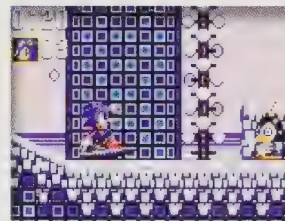
**Japanese title:** *Sonic & Tails 2* | **Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Aspect | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** Game Gear | **Japan release:** November 11, 1994 | **US release:** November 1994 | **Europe release:** November 1994 | **Number of players:** 1



Even though *Sonic Triple Trouble* was the ninth Sonic platformer to be released since the series' inception in 1991, it was the first one to be released exclusively for SEGA's portable console, the Game Gear. For this iteration, the team at Aspect pulled out all the stops. Even though this was a direct sequel to *Sonic Chaos* and, as such, shared many things in common with it, this adventure was much longer and more ambitious.

In fact, *Triple Trouble*'s huge levels are very impressive, even next to the Genesis titles. The special stages, a mix of torturous mazes and 3D flight sequences, received extra care. In these stages you would also face off with Nack the Weasel, a troublemaker dressed like Indiana Jones. It was also the first time that Knuckles the Echidna, the Master Emerald's keeper, appeared in an 8-bit title.

This beautiful, colorful game reused the best ideas from the previous titles (for instance, the vehicles in *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*) while improving them. *Triple Trouble*, directed by Katsuhiro Hasegawa and produced by Mr. Hoko, was undoubtedly the pinnacle of the series on Game Gear. ■



## Trivia

- Some promotional screenshots showed Nack using a gun, but that was probably pulled from the game to keep its "E" rating.
- Nack would continue to make cameo appearances in other games for two more years before disappearing entirely, much to the fans' dismay. They are still waiting for the treasure hunting weasel to make a comeback.
- A certain "H. Kojima" was mentioned in the game's end credits. No one knows if this was really the famous creator of the *Metal Gear Solid* series.
- *Sonic Triple Trouble* was adapted to the Coleco Sonic handheld, along with 19 other ports from the Game Gear and Master System.
- A 48-page comic book entitled *Sonic Triple Trouble* was published in the United States in August 1995.
- The Sea Fox submarine piloted by Tails in Tidal Plant Zone also appeared in the game *Tails' Adventure*.



# SONIC BLAST

Gソニック

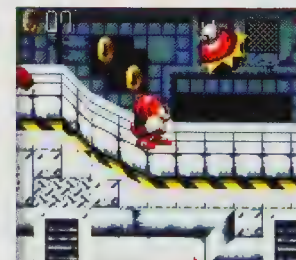
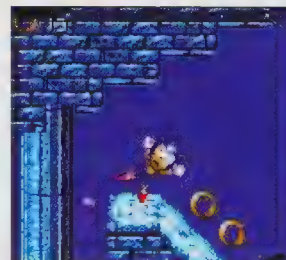
**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Aspect | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** Game Gear | **Japan release:** December 13, 1996 | **US release:** November 1996 | **Europe release:** November 1996 | **Number of players:** 1



*Sonic Blast* was like the Game Gear's *Sonic & Knuckles*. Just like in the 16-bit title, you could control the red echidna, who was able to climb walls. Sonic even had to learn how to do double jumps so as not to lag behind. Another similarity? The pyramid in Yellow Desert Zone reminds us of Sandopolis Zone from the illustrious *Sonic & Knuckles*. But the similarities stop there. The other levels drew most of their inspiration from the console versions of *Sonic The Hedgehog* 1, 2 and 3. The same goes for the hybrid bonus stages, in which the player had to catch rings (*Sonic The Hedgehog* 2) scattered around a huge checkered globe (*Sonic The Hedgehog* 3).

But the unofficial source of inspiration was likely *Donkey Kong Country*, which was released two years earlier on the Super Nintendo. *Sonic Blast* indeed had a similar graphical style, which was reminiscent of the computer-generated graphics that were

popular at the time. *Sonic Blast* was probably not the best game in the series, but seeing its pre-rendered 3D sprites on the Game Gear was impressive at the time. Sadly, this was a one-time feat. *Sonic Blast* was the last title featuring the famous blue hedgehog on the Game Gear. ■



## Trivia

- *Sonic Blast* came out at the same time as... *Sonic 3D Blast*. Quite confusing.
- The game was ported to the Master System by Tectoy in Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina, the only countries where the 8-bit console was still in production. Unlike the normal levels, the special stages appeared in their original resolution, in a small window.
- *Sonic Blast* came out in Japan on the Kid's Gear console. This redesigned Game Gear was launched in March 1996 to attract a younger audience and to try and boost the portable console's sales, which had been steadily declining since 1995.



# SONIC THE HEDGEHOG POCKET ADVENTURE

ソニック・ザ・ヘッジホッグ ポケットアドベンチャー

**Publisher:** SNK/SEGA | **Developer:** Dimps/Sonic Team | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** NeoGeo Pocket Color  
**Color** | **Japan release:** January 11, 2000 | **US release:** November 30, 1999 | **Europe release:** December 3, 1999 | **Number of players:** 1-2



*Sonic Pocket Adventure* marked the debut of a collaboration between Sonic Team and the studio Dimps — founded by the designer of *Street Fighter* and *The King of Fighters*, Takashi Nishiyama — for the development of Sonic games. Furthermore, this game's development was supervised by Yuji Naka, while its production was handled by Hiroshi Matsumoto and Mr. Nishiyama. This NeoGeo Pocket Color title was released at the dawn of the year 2000, and borrowed or repurposed several elements from *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* on the Genesis, with a few differences (particularly in terms of level design).

Strangely, the method of reaching the special stages was taken from the original Sonic, with the requirement of getting to the end of a level with 50 rings in hand. Sonic was the only playable character in this title, in contrast to previous titles. A multiplayer mode was also included for those with two handhelds and a link cable. The Duel Room offered two games, "Sonic Rush" and "Get the Rings". Whichever you chose, Sonic would face off with his best buddy Tails, who was playable in multiplayer. ■



## Trivia

- *Sonic Pocket Adventure* was the second game after *Sonic Jam* to be released on a non-SEGA console.
- In terms of graphics, the game mixed classic elements from the Genesis and Master System titles with a design aesthetic straight from *Sonic Adventure*.
- Most of the music in *Sonic Pocket Adventure* is taken from *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* and *Sonic & Knuckles*.
- *Sonic Pocket Adventure* was the one and only SEGA game to be released on an SNK console.

## SONIC ADVANCE

ソニックアドバンス

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Dimps/Sonic Team | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** Game Boy Advance |  
**Japan release:** December 22, 2001 | **US release:** February 4, 2002 | **Europe release:** March 23, 2002 |  
**Number of players:** 1-4



Produced by Yuji Naka (Sonic Team) and Hiroshi Matsumoto (Dimps), *Sonic Advance* marked one of the hedgehog's first appearances on a Nintendo console. The whole game was designed to be an oldschool, 2D throwback to the Genesis titles in terms of gameplay, and there were no big innovations – after all, if it ain't broke, why fix it? However, the four playable characters – Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, and Amy – with different characteristics and abilities brought a little something new to the table.

*Sonic Advance*'s multiplayer options were quite robust, with the ability to play with up to four people at the same time. This could be done with just one cartridge or with several, and in the latter case, even more options opened up. Finally, the game included a simpler version of the Chao (pronounced "chow") Garden from *Sonic Adventure*, which allowed you to raise the cute little characters, much like Bandai's famous Tamagotchi. ■



### Trivia

- *Sonic Advance* was also released under another name: *Sonic N*. This version was launched in 2003 on Nokia's mobile phone/gaming handheld hybrid, the N-Gage.
- The X-Zone stage, just before the final battle, made you fight the first level bosses from *Sonic The Hedgehog* and *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*, with their original music.
- *Sonic Advance* was the first 2D *Sonic* in which you could play as Amy Rose.





# SONIC ADVANCE 2

ソニックアドバンス 2

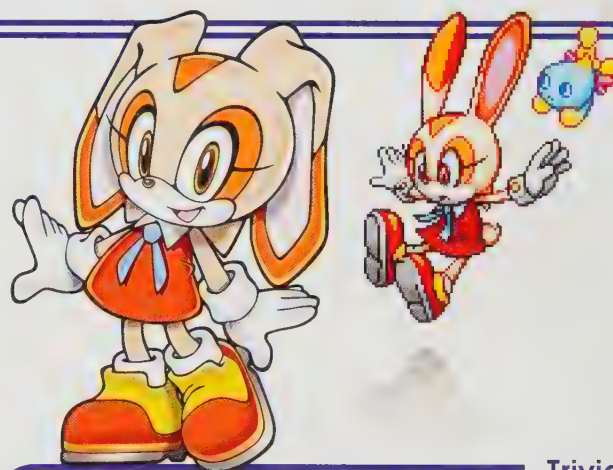
**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Dimps/Sonic Team | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** Game Boy Advance |  
**Japan release:** December 19, 2002 | **US release:** March 10, 2003 | **Europe release:** March 18, 2003 |  
**Number of players:** 1-4



Bigger, faster, deeper, and more beautiful: it was with *Sonic Advance 2* that the hedgehog definitely made a name for himself on Nintendo's portable. While *Sonic Advance* was very similar to Genesis games, this title, produced by Yuji Naka and directed by Akinori Nishiyama, brought the best of both worlds together by drawing inspiration from the 3D titles. Without neglecting precision, exploration, and combat, *Sonic Advance 2* and its somewhat abstract levels put the emphasis on pure speed.

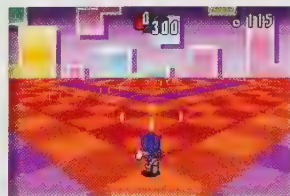
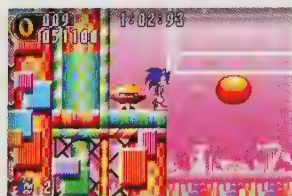
It was one of the most technical games in the series thanks to the trick system, which allowed each hero to do a special move while airborne. This proved useful for destroying enemies and reaching new heights. Additionally, each character's special moves had seen some improvements from the previous game.

The icing on the cake was the boost system, which rewarded players for building and maintaining speed. Faster than ever, Sonic and his friends could perform new Boost Attacks and even walk on water once they entered Boost mode! Ultimately, *Sonic Advance 2* was undoubtedly one of the best games in the series, thanks to superb 2D animation and impressive speed, which had been improved from the previous title. ■



## Trivia

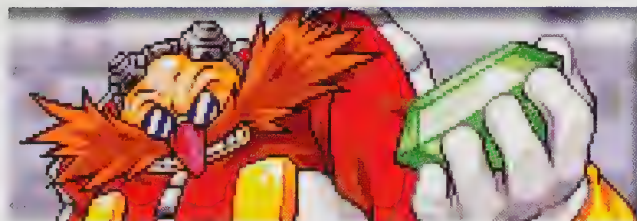
- For the first time, you could play as Cream the Rabbit and her adorable Chao Cheese, who she could throw at enemies. However, she had actually already made her debut a few months earlier in the bonus features of the *Sonic Mega Collection* compilation.
- Besides Cream, you could also play as Sonic, Tails, or Knuckles, as in *Sonic Advance*. Amy, on the other hand, had to be unlocked by both finishing the game and collecting all the Chaos Emeralds with the other characters first.
- *Sonic Advance 2* was one of the few titles in the series to not include a water level.
- The robot that you had to dodge in the special stages was none other than Zero from *Sonic Adventure*.



## SONIC ADVANCE 3

ソニックアドバンス 3

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Dimps/Sonic Team | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** Game Boy Advance |  
**Japan release:** June 17, 2004 | **US release:** June 7, 2004 | **Europe release:** June 18, 2004 | **Number of players:** 1-4



Instead of resting on its laurels, the studio Dimps – still supervised by Sonic Team and Yuji Naka – used this last episode of the trilogy to completely change the way in which the hedgehog's adventures usually unfolded. Here, just like in *Sonic 2* on the Genesis, the player could always count on the help of a companion, whether they were controlled by the game's AI or a friend.

Depending on their teammate, each character could perform different moves. Thus, accompanied by Sonic, Knuckles was able to dash forward in the air, while with Tails, he could do a double jump before gliding. Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Amy, and Cream: five heroes, four companions for each, 20 possibilities – and that was not all! With a push of the R button, each teammate could also perform a Tag Action. Tails could, for instance, throw the leader high up into the air, or airlift them over dangerous obstacles.

All of these new features complemented carefully thought out level designs, which challenged players to use each character and team's unique abilities to find hidden Chao and keys that would grant access to the special stages. In short, it was a unique adventure that had something for everyone. ■



### Trivia

- It was Yuji Naka who insisted on having a two-player co-op mode in *Sonic Advance 3*.
- The songs for all three acts of the game's second level, Sunset Hill Zone, are remixes of the theme for Green Hill Zone, the very first level of *Sonic The Hedgehog*.
- In the Japanese instruction manual, we learn that Sonic's favorite food is chili dogs.



# SONIC RUSH

ソニック・ラッシュ

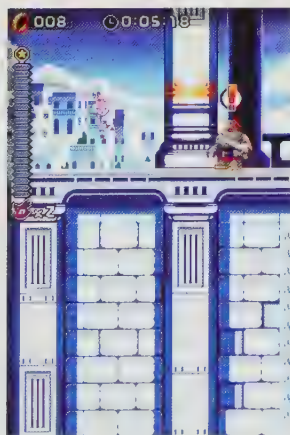
**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Dimps/Sonic Team | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** Nintendo DS | **Japan release:** November 23, 2005 | **US release:** November 15, 2005 | **Europe release:** November 18, 2005 | **Number of players:** 1-2



Developed by Dimps and Sonic Team, *Sonic Rush* continued the *Sonic Advance* tradition of old-school, 2D gameplay on a Nintendo handheld, even if some elements – like the characters – were polygonal, to take advantage of the DS' increased capabilities. The dual screen display was a real novelty, showing the playing area on both screens. Focused on speed rather than exploration, this title sent Sonic and newcomer Blaze the Cat rocketing off of gigantic ramps and bouncing wildly off of bumpers.

The end-of-level boss fights were particularly impressive, as they were made entirely in 3D and provided incredible viewing angles during the battles. Finally, the special stages used the DS's touch screen in levels that were very similar to those in *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*.

*Sonic Rush* was well-received by both players and critics, and marked the hedgehog's arrival on the DS. It sold about three million copies, including 1.08 million in the United States alone. ■



## Trivia

- *Sonic Rush*'s music was written by the famous composer Hideki Naganuma, whose previous work includes the fabulous soundtracks for SEGA's *Jet Set Radio* and *Ollie King*.
- The soundtrack was released in Japan on November 23, 2005. There were 45 tracks, including seven remixes.
- *Sonic Rush*'s project name was "Sonic DS" when it was announced for the first time during the Electronic Entertainment Expo in 2004.
- In the Japanese version of the game, Blaze spoke Japanese, while Sonic spoke English.
- *Sonic Rush* was released on the same day as *Shadow The Hedgehog* in the U.S. and Europe.
- *Sonic Rush* was the first Sonic game to use the "Combo Tricks" system.



## SONIC RUSH ADVENTURE

ソニック ラッシュ アドベンチャー

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Dimps/Sonic Team | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** Nintendo DS | **Japan release:** October 18, 2007 | **US release:** September 18, 2007 | **Europe release:** September 18, 2007 | **Number of players:** 1-2



Developed by Dimps under the supervision of Sonic Team, this direct sequel to *Sonic Rush* featured an online versus mode using the Nintendo DS' network communication capabilities. Blaze returned as a playable character for *Rush Adventure*, and both she and Sonic could perform tricks during jumps. Doing so filled the Tension Gauge, which then allowed the player to use the ultra-fast, almost-invincible "Super Boost" (Sonic) or "Fire Boost" (Blaze) move until the gauge depleted.

Exploring was, as one might have guessed from the title, a major theme of the game, as Sonic and Blaze could search for vehicle-building materials in uncharted territories. *Rush Adventure* also introduced a new secondary character in Marine the Raccoon, who lives in Blaze's home world. The game's levels often had several paths that were rarely linear. Finally, the game featured brand-new racing sequences, where you could pilot different aquatic vehicles using the DS' stylus. ■



### Trivia

- *Sonic Rush Adventure* was the first Sonic game to feature an online versus mode, via the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection.
- The game's musical director, Teruhiko Nakagawa, chose to create funk and hip-hop melodies for the soundtrack, a first for a Sonic game.
- *Sonic Rush Adventure* was published by Nintendo in South Korea, despite the fact that SEGA has a division there.
- Almost all of the voice-overs were reused from *Sonic Rush*.





# SONIC RIVALS

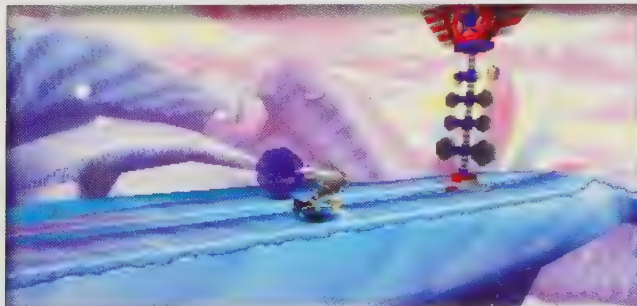
ソニック ライバルズ

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Backbone Entertainment | **Genre:** Platformer/Racing | **Platform:** PSP | **Japan release:** None | **US release:** November 14, 2006 | **Europe release:** December 1, 2006 | **Number of players:** 1-2



Published in 2006, *Sonic Rivals* marked the hedgehog's arrival on Sony's PlayStation Portable. A PSP exclusive, it was also the first Sonic game developed by a Canadian studio, Backbone Entertainment. *Sonic Rivals* focused mostly on racing. As the title suggests, the aim was to beat your rivals to the goal and speed through all six courses on Onyx Island, the game's setting. Besides series superstars Sonic and Knuckles, the playable cast also included Shadow, Metal Sonic, and Silver, a hedgehog with mysterious telekinetic powers.

The game also included a multiplayer mode and allowed two PSP owners to battle each other via network play. During races, it was possible to use seven different items, both offensive and defensive. As usual, at the end of each race, players had to face a boss, but in this game they could take on bosses with their rival to turn the tables! The game also included a gallery of 150 collectible cards. As players found them, new costumes and other hidden bonuses would become available. Finally, a Challenge Mode provided specific missions to complete. ■



## Trivia

- The development of *Sonic Rivals* took Backbone Entertainment 11 months to complete.
- On May 4th, 2005, almost a year and a half after the release of *Sonic Rivals*, the video game retailer GameStop had another PSP Sonic title on their release schedule, dated for November 1st. We still do not know where that information came from, but SEGA declared that "there was nothing concrete at the time."
- *Sonic Rivals* was the first Sonic game not to be released in Japan.
- The music in the first level was composed by Jun Senoue and produced by English musician Lee Brotherton, better known as Bentley Jones.



## SONIC RIVALS 2

ソニック ライバルズ 2

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Backbone Entertainment/SEGA Studios USA | **Genre:** Platformer/Racing | **Platform:** PSP | **Japan release:** None | **US release:** November 13, 2007 | **Europe release:** December 7, 2007 | **Number of players:** 1-2



Produced by Taylor Miller and directed by Takashi Iizuka, *Sonic Rivals 2* kept the same ideas as its predecessor while adding more content in order to improve its longevity. Players raced through 12 new tracks along with a partner. In the main adventure, all four teams (Sonic/Tails, Shadow/Metal Sonic, Silver/Espio, and Knuckles/Rouge) had their own stories, which unfolded as the player won races and defeated bosses. Two new solo modes, Free Play and Time Attack, were also added. Success often hinged on the player's ability to memorize the track layouts.

There were no less than six different types of multiplayer battles, including one in a closed arena. More than just a copy-paste job with new content, *Sonic Rivals 2* was a much better game than its predecessor. Visually, the game made better use of the PSP's capabilities, but the game often scrolled so fast that it was difficult to admire the beautiful backgrounds. ■



### Trivia

- The developers at Backbone Entertainment specialized in emulation and the porting of arcade games to computers and consoles.
- SEGA Studios USA, formerly called Sonic Team USA, supervised the development of both *Sonic Rivals* games.
- The game's main theme, "Race to Win", was written by Ted Poley, the American lead singer in the band Danger Danger. It was produced by Jun Senoue.
- There was a typo on one of the game's collectible cards. The name of the genie "Shahra" was spelled "Shanhra".
- *Sonic Rivals 2* marked the first time where, on the game's box art, not a single character was smiling.
- *Sonic Rivals 2* was the second Sonic game to go unreleased in Japan, the first being its predecessor.
- Eggman's nose was not pink in *Sonic Rivals 2*.







# SONIC COLORS

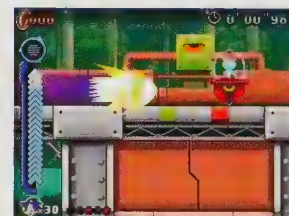
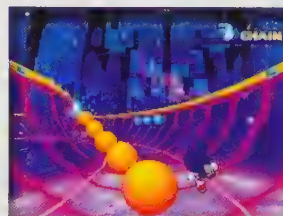
ソニック カラーズ

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Dimps/Sonic Team | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** Nintendo DS |  
**Japan release:** November 18, 2010 | **US release:** November 16, 2010 | **Europe release:** November 12, 2010 | **Number of players:** 1-2



Sonic certainly had his share of exciting adventures on the DS, but this one was the most "colorful" by far! Benefiting from a simultaneous release on both the DS and the Wii, both versions of *Sonic Colors* are actually quite different. For the DS version, Dimps decided to create an old-school platformer in the style of *Sonic Rush*. Much like that title, *Colors* eschewed a detailed pixel-art look in favor of a 2D/3D hybrid style, with 2D environments and gameplay but polygonal character models, which was more dynamic and a bit closer to what the console version of *Colors* looked like.

In contrast to the Wii version of *Sonic Colors*, the DS version includes a full cast of characters from the series – a direct result of producer Takashi Iizuka's influence. Fans were thrilled to find Cream, Shadow, and the rest of the gang in this version. Some creative liberties had to be taken to adapt the Wii version's story and stages to this handheld version, but of course, the Wisps were on hand to grant Sonic special powers. In fact, some Wisps were exclusive to this version: the "Violet Wisp", which turned Sonic into a black hole that would suck in enemies, and the "Red Wisp", which transformed him into a fireball that could launch into the air. Players could also interact with unique elements in the environment, such as popcorn cannons. ■



## Trivia

- *Sonic Colors* was the first Sonic platformer to have both a console and a handheld version since *Sonic 2* was released in 1992.
- The DS version's ending is quite different from the console version's, with a "real" final boss to fight. Spoiler alert: It is actually the Wisps' mother, possessed by the negative Hyper-go-on energy.



# MOBILE SONIC GAMES

## SONIC CAFÉ SERIES

ソニックカフェ

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Mini-games  
**Platform:** i-mode Keitai compatible | **Japan release:** 2001 |  
**US release:** 2002, 2008 | **Europe release:** 2002, 2008 | **Number of players:** 1



During the second half of the 1990s, the mobile phone craze invaded Japan. SEGA wanted to test this market and launched several mini-games before massively investing in this project. The concept was simple: for two euros a month (about £1.70 or \$1.35), users had access to several titles. You could bring Sonic everywhere you went, and have him bowl, play billiards, golf, and backgammon, drive karts, throw darts, or even learn how to fish. i-Mode ports of the first two Sonic games were the icing on the cake. Some of these games would later be sold separately in the West. ■

## Trivia

- This service lasted until 2007 and averaged five new games each year. In the end, there were about 40 titles.



# SONIC N

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Platformer  
| **Platform:** N-Gage | **Japan release:** None | **US release:**  
October 7, 2003 | **Europe release:** October 6, 2003 | **Number**  
**of players:** 1

Despite its different title, this game was actually an N-Gage port of *Sonic Advance*, which had been published on the Game Boy Advance one year earlier. Launched at the same time as Nokia's hybrid gadget, *Sonic N* was only released in the U.S., Europe, and Australia. While the port was solid, there were still several differences. The main one was the size of the N-Gage's screen, which was smaller than on Nintendo's console. Furthermore, the screen's vertical orientation cut the image off on the left and right sides. Yet the graphics were close to those of the GBA original, despite the N-Gage's lower resolution, and the animation was surprisingly faithful. It was still fun to play, even if more anticipation was required since you couldn't see as far ahead. Unfortunately, the GBA version's versus mode and Chao Garden were not included. ■

## Trivia

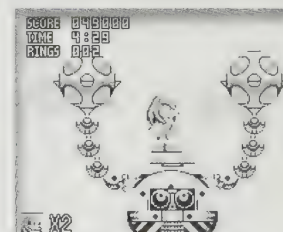
- SEGA was a fierce supporter of the N-Gage, releasing *Super Monkey Ball* on Nokia's platform as well.
- *Sonic N* included an option to switch between full resolution (with a smaller image) and a 4:3 aspect ratio.



# SONIC JAM

**Publisher:** Tiger Electronics | **Developer:** SEGA | **Genre:** Platformer  
| **Platform:** Game.com | **Japan release:** None | **US release:**  
January 1, 1998 | **Europe release:** None | **Number of players:** 1

One year after the Saturn version of *Sonic Jam*, the game was ported to the Game.com, marking the hedgehog's first appearance on a rival handheld system. The game, known for being really short, featured just three levels: one from *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* (Emerald Hill Zone), one from *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* (Angel Island Zone), and one from *Sonic & Knuckles* (Mushroom Hill Zone). Despite the fact that the Game.com had a touch screen, the game used the directional pad. Sadly, all three available characters – Sonic, Tails, and Knuckles – played identically. Only Tails stood out a bit with his ability to fly. Also unfortunate: the gameplay turned out to be disrupted by the slow display of objects on the screen, which was quite an issue for such a fast game. ■



## Trivia

- The Game.com was a U.S.-only portable console. Made by Tiger Electronics, only 300,000 units were sold.
- Even though it only had a black and white screen, the Game.com was the first gaming handheld to include a touch screen and an integrated modem to send emails.
- At first, the game was scheduled to include other levels, including stages from *Sonic 3D Blast* if you believe the pictures released at the time. Another one of these pictures showed Super Sonic from *Sonic The Hedgehog 3*.



# SONIC GENERATIONS

ソニック ジェネレーションズ 青の冒険

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team/Dimps | **Genre:** Platformer | **Platform:** 3DS | **Japan release:** December 1, 2011 | **US release:** November 22, 2011 | **Europe release:** November 25, 2011 | **Number of players:** 1-2



With *Sonic Generations*, Takashi Iizuka – who began and led the anniversary project – did his best to bring Sonic fans new and old together with a high-quality title that sums up the world-famous hedgehog's 20-year career. "When I look at market studies, I have to admit that most of the time, people say they love the old Sonic (games) and do not like the latest productions," said Iizuka. "But when you take a closer look at this, these people have rarely tried anything else. On the contrary, the younger audience today has not had the opportunity to play a Mega Drive episode. They do not know how pleasant and interesting the 2D gameplay is. It's just an old game (to them), and they have never played it. It is exactly the same thing with the fans of the classic games. They are not aware of the experience offered by modern Sonic titles."

The idea was very simple: mix the 2D Sonic games' beloved gameplay with the new features and innovations found in the modern, 3D Sonic titles. This 3DS version features main levels that play mostly in 2D – like the classic titles – and special stages presented in glorious 3D that are, in many ways, an improved, more refined take on *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*'s special stages. The 3DS version of *Generations* also boasted exclusive levels – for instance, Mushroom Hill Zone from *Sonic & Knuckles*. The graphics, of course, were striking, making all of the game's beloved, classic zones look better than ever! Furthermore, the 3DS version's animation is perfectly fluid and stunningly dynamic. Supervised by Tetsu Katano (*Sonic and the Black Knight*), Sonic's first foray into the world of stereoscopic 3D once again showed that the Dimps/Sonic Team alliance works like a charm... ■





## Two albums or nothing

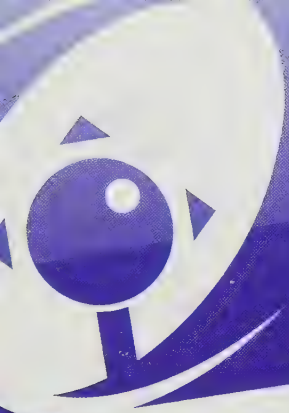
Jun Senoue is, beyond a shadow of a doubt, the Sonic series' most prolific musician, having been involved in the production of more of the series' soundtracks than anyone else. Obviously, it would have been surprising not to find him in this anniversary title! Aside from the full soundtrack album, Senoue created two music CDs for *Sonic Generations*. "History of the First Stage: White Edition" included some music from the console version of the game, while the other, called "History of the First Stage: Blue Edition", features some of the 3DS version's music.



## Trivia

- The music in the 3DS version's special stages is none other than a theme from *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™* called "Dream Bobsleigh (Nocturnus Gate)"... which itself is a remix of one of *Sonic Heroes*' special stage themes.
- The handheld version of *Sonic Generations* utilizes all of the 3DS's features except for its StreetPass functionality.





# SPIN-OFF GAMES







# SPIN-OFF GAMES



## WAKU WAKU SONIC PATROL CAR

わくわくソニックパトカー

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** SEGA AM4 | **Genre:** Action | **Platform:** Arcade (SEGA System C-2) | **Japan release:** December 1991 | **US release:** None | **Europe release:** None | **Number of players:** 1

Much like *Cosmo Fighter Galaxy Patrol*, this game was created for young children and it was only playable in arcades. Using the same graphics engine as *Cosmo Fighter*, players sat in a "super-deformed" (SD) police car. The goal was to restore order in town by eliminating Robotnik. To this end, Sonic drove around in his vehicle, which the player controlled with a steering wheel. With the press of a button, the player could make Sonic get out of the car or activate the siren. Of course, the car the player sat in moved according to their in-game movements, like many games of its type. ■

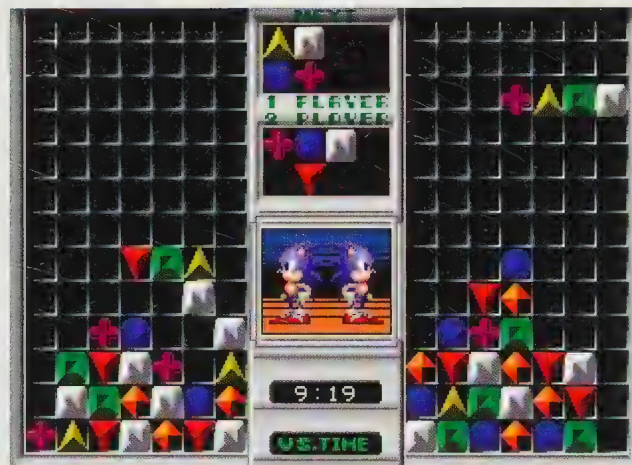
### Trivia

- Just like *Cosmo Fighter Galaxy Patrol*, the game was made for arcade hardware built from the Genesis' architecture. Interestingly, it was the first Sonic game where the hedgehog talked.

## SONIC ERASER

ソニックイレイザー

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Puzzle | **Platform:** Genesis (only available on SEGA Meganet) | **Japan release:** 1991 | **US release:** None | **Europe release:** None | **Number of players:** 1-2



*Sonic Eraser* is undoubtedly one of the most obscure games in the series, since it was only available in Japan from SEGA Meganet, an online service for the Genesis. The game's simple concept was inspired by *Columns*, which itself was a descendant of *Tetris*. The versus mode allowed the player to launch attacks at their opponent, much like in *Puyo Puyo*. The game included four different modes of play in all, each with their own set of rules. ■

### Trivia

- Sonic Eraser* was released again in 2004 on the B-Club, a SEGA-developed online emulation service in Japan.



# SEGA SONIC COSMO FIGHTER

セガソニック コスモファイター

Also known as: *SEGA Sonic Cosmo Fighter Galaxy Patrol* |  
**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** SEGA AM4 | **Genre:** Shooter |  
**Platform:** Arcade | **Japan release:** 1993 | **US release:** None |  
**Europe release:** None | **Number of players:** 1

This arcade-only title was a fun shooting game designed for children. Simple in concept, the game required the player to drive a spaceship and avoid several obstacles while destroying the enemies in their way. The aim was to save the Flickies and other animals that had been captured by the evil Dr. Eggman. A lever was used to accelerate, and the player's movements were controlled with a joystick. Two buttons also allowed the player to fire or switch their weapon. The cabinet's built-in vehicle moved according to the in-game action, but the movements were tame, considering safety standards at the time and the fact that the game was intended for young players. ■

## Trivia

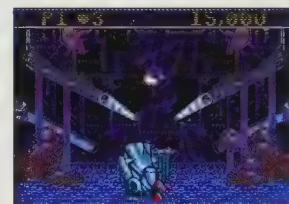
- In the 1990s, arcade venues in Japan became more family friendly, and it was not unusual to find one in a shopping center. This was why SEGA developed simple games for younger audiences, like this one.



# SONIC SPINBALL

ソニック・スピンボール

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** SEGA Technical Institute (Genesis ver.)/SEGA Interactive Tech Division (8-bit ver.) | **Genre:** Pinball | **Platform:** Genesis, Game Gear, Master System | **Japan release:** December 10, 1993 (Genesis) | **US release:** November 23, 1993 (Genesis) / September 1994 (GG) | **Europe release:** November 15, 1993 (Genesis) / August 1994 (GG) / January 1995 (MS) | **Number of players:** 1-4 (turn-based)



Since Sonic can roll himself into a ball, it was only natural for him to appear in a pinball game at some point. *Sonic Spinball* included four tables, all inspired by Sonic's cartoon adventures. Its main difference from classic pinball was the fact that you could influence Sonic's trajectory with the D-pad, even though bumpers, flippers, and other pinball mainstays still ruled the day. Even though it was quite fun, *Sonic Spinball* is still one of the series' more obscure titles. ■

## Trivia

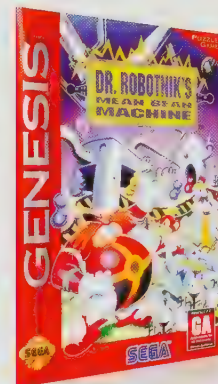
- Craig Stitt, Brenda Ross, and Tom Payne, who also worked as graphic designers on *Sonic The Hedgehog 2*, had created tables inspired by two of *Sonic 2*'s scrapped zones, Hidden Palace and Genocide City. But they had to be modified due to internal reasons, and became Toxic Caves and The Machine, respectively.



## DR. ROBOTNIK'S MEAN BEAN MACHINE

ぷよぷよ

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Compile/SEGA Technical Institute | **Genre:** Puzzle | **Platform:** Genesis, Game Gear, Master System | **Japan release:** Released as *Puyo Puyo* on December 18, 1992 (Gen.) / March 19, 1993 (GG) | **US release:** November 1993 (Gen.) / December 1993 (GG) | **Europe release:** November 1993 (Gen.) / January 1994 (GG) / July 26, 1994 (MS) | **Number of players:** 1-2



With his astounding IQ of 300, Dr. Robotnik is a brainy man to be sure, so it is only logical to find him in a game designed to make players use their noggins. A puzzle game, *Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine* was actually a Sonic-themed version of a beloved classic title developed by Compile: *Puyo Puyo*! Despite the hedgehog-flavored makeover, though, the game was still a clever mix of *Tetris* and *Columns*. *Puyo Puyo*'s main difference lies at the heart of its gameplay.

Whether it was in solo or versus mode, players had to fight a new enemy in each level before they could advance to the next round. Doing this was fairly simple; the player only had to line up four beans of the same color as they fell from the top of the screen. Like-colored beans would disappear once they were lined up in fours. By executing combos and destroying several "clusters" of beans at the same time, players could attack their opponent, which interrupted their moves. The game's speed progressively increased the longer a round lasted, making sure the game remained challenging. Simple and addictive, *Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine* was a great game for two players. ■

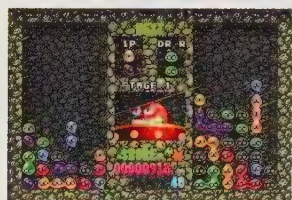






## The 8-bit versions

Released on the Master System and Game Gear, the 8-bit version of *Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine* is almost identical to the Genesis version, except for one addition: Puzzle Mode, borrowed from *Nazo Puyo*, another puzzle game developed for the Game Gear by Compie. This mode challenged players to solve particularly difficult puzzles!

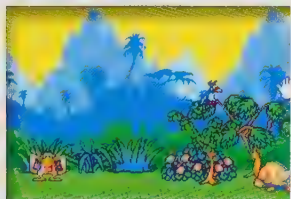


## Trivia

- *Puyo Puyo*, upon which *Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine* was based, has no ties to the Sonic saga. It was released in 1991 on the MSX and Famicom Disk System, and then in arcades in 1992.
- SEGA bought the rights to *Puyo Puyo* and continued the series by releasing it in the West under the name *Puyo Pop*. In Japan, there are seven *Puyo Puyo* titles.
- The game features characters from the cartoon *The Adventures of Sonic the Hedgehog*.

## WACKY WORLDS CREATIVITY STUDIO

**Publisher:** SEGA/The Learning Company | **Developer:** HeadGames | **Genre:** Educational | **Platform:** Genesis, PC, Mac | **Japan release:** None | **US release:** March 24, 1994 | **Europe release:** None | **Number of players:** 1



*Wacky Worlds* was a coloring game for young children. The game also let players put together pictures and create virtual settings. They first chose pictures, logos, and sprite images to put into a scene. After that, the colors could be changed if so desired. Once all choices were made, the images moved around the scenery on pre-recorded trajectories. Players could also add their own custom music to the scene by changing certain options. To make the game easier to play, it was bundled with a SEGA-branded mouse and mouse pad. ■

### Trivia

- *Wacky Worlds* is mistakenly considered to be the sequel to *Art Alive*, which was developed by FarSight Studios.

## SONIC THE HEDGEHOG'S GAMEWORLD

ソニック・ザ・ヘッジホッグ ゲームワールド

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Aspect | **Genre:** Party | **Platform:** Pico | **Japan release:** August 1994 | **US release:** November 1995 | **Europe release:** None | **Number of players:** 1

Unlike the other games available for this platform, this Pico title broke from the norm with a compilation of mini-games that were not educational in the slightest bit. Here, the only goal was to have fun! Your mission? Find all the Chaos Emeralds, hidden by Dr. Robotnik in an amusement park. Each floor contained several simple mini-games, like a UFO Catcher crane game or a guessing game. The American version also included drawing software, which made good use of the Pico's stylus. ■

### Trivia

- Strangely enough, the American version was censored, omitting content like the fortune-telling game, "rock, paper, scissors", and various casino-based gambling games.





# SONIC DRIFT

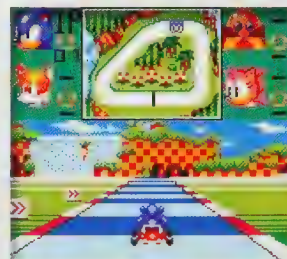
ソニック ドリフト

Publisher: SEGA | Developer: SEGA | Genre: Racing | Platform: Game Gear | Japan release: March 18, 1994  
| US release: None | Europe release: None | Number of players: 1-2



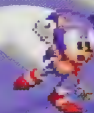
Mario, Mega Man, Bomberman, Crash Bandicoot... every one of these video game icons had their own kart racing game. Sonic, of course, was not about to be the exception, so in *Sonic Drift*, he and his friends hit the road in their own karts and took part in some frantic races. The word "drift" in the title is a reference to drifting, a racing technique that is both very popular in Japan and the key to victory in this game. Players had to drift carefully, though, or else they'd end up crashing their kart. Naturally, the tracks included many obstacles and power-up items taken from the Sonic universe. For example, collecting enough rings during a race allowed Sonic and friends to launch a special attack. There

were also springboards that made the vehicles soar into the air, and turbo boost and invincibility items were available as well. The goal of the game was to win all three Chaos Cups, and there were six tracks in total – each one based on one of the zones from the original *Sonic The Hedgehog*. ■



## Trivia

- It was in *Sonic Drift* that Amy Rose made her first appearance as a playable character. She drove a vehicle called "Breeze" that would be seen again in the game's sequel, and she also carried an umbrella.
- The invincibility music in *Sonic Drift* was based on the fan-favorite song "Sonic – You Can Do Anything", which was actually the opening theme for the Japanese version of *Sonic CD*.



## TAILS AND THE MUSIC MAKER

テイルス アンド ザ ミュージックメーカー

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Novotrade | **Genre:** Educational |  
**Platform:** Pico | **Japan release:** September 1994 | **US release:**  
 December 5, 1994 | **Europe release:** 1995 | **Number of players:** 1

Developed for the Pico, SEGA's educational console, *Tails and the Music Maker* was a music-teaching tool for young children. The adventure was divided into five pages where the player learned basic rhythms, musical scales, and the differences between various instruments. Once the basics were grasped, players could start practicing what they'd learned by creating their own pieces. The game's support of both the Pico's stylus and the standard D-pad was really clever, and ultimately, *Tails and the Music Maker* was quite well-received! ■

### Trivia

- The Pico hardware is based on the Genesis' architecture. Only the FM and Z80 processors were missing.



## KNUCKLES' CHAOTIX

カオティクス

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** SEGA AM7 | **Genre:** Platformer |  
**Platform:** 32X | **Japan release:** April 21, 1995 | **US release:** March  
 1995 | **Europe release:** May 1995 | **Number of players:** 1-2



Simply named *Chaotix* in the Land of the Rising Sun, this special episode in the series went rather unnoticed because it was only released for the 32X, the Genesis' 32-bit add-on. Its main innovation was that the player controlled two characters at the same time, who were tied together by a rubber band of sorts. Needless to say, the inertia brought about by this setup was quite original. *Knuckles' Chaotix* had five playable characters: Knuckles himself, Espio, Charmy, Mighty, and Vector. In the end, the gameplay was both similar to and quite different from the mainline Sonic titles. ■

### Trivia

- *Knuckles' Chaotix* was to be called *Knuckles' Ring Star* at first.
- This game has its roots in an Internet-famous Genesis prototype game called "Sonic Crackers".
- Several other characters were planned to be playable but did not make it into the final game, like Amy Rose and the mysterious Wechnia.



# SONIC DRIFT 2

ソニック ドリフト2

European title: *Sonic Drift Racing* | Publisher: SEGA | Developer: SEGA | Genre: Racing | Platform: Game Gear | Japan release: March 17, 1995 | US release: November 1995 | Europe release: March 1995 | Number of players: 1-2



Unlike its older brother, which was never released outside of Japan, *Sonic Drift 2* was released in the U.S., and in Europe under the title *Sonic Drift Racing*. It took the same characters from the first title and added Knuckles, Nack, and even Metal Sonic. Like in most kart racing games, the characters differed from one another in three categories – acceleration, speed, and handling – and had differing special abilities. Eggman was, therefore, very slow but easy to handle, and Sonic was the exact opposite. New power-up items were also available, such as a star that could blind opponents for a short time. The unforgettable Reverse Ball inverted opponents' steering controls, and players could also acquire land mines and drop them on the track. Even though this was not a particularly memorable title, Sonic's second kart racing game still provided fans with many hours of fun. *Sonic R*, and more recently *Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing*, have since served as further proof that Sonic and racing games are a good match. ■

## Trivia

- After more than 15 years in retirement, *Sonic Drift 2* is scheduled for a triumphant return on the 3DS eShop. The release date is still to be determined.
- Even though the game's name was changed to *Sonic Drift Racing* on the European box art, the title screen still displayed *Sonic Drift 2*.

## TAILS' SKYPATROL

テイルスのスカイパトロール

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** SIMS/JSH | **Genre:** Shooter |  
**Platform:** Game Gear | **Japan release:** April 28, 1995 | **US**  
**release:** None | **Europe release:** None | **Number of players:** 1



A Game Gear exclusive, this game put Sonic's faithful companion, Tails, in the spotlight. In fact, the game takes place before he even met the famous hedgehog. To protect the inhabitants of an island from total destruction, our two-tailed fox had to fly through the levels without hitting the ground or any object, which caused instant death. Managing his remaining energy was very important and required him to collect candy. The only weapon at Tails' disposal was a gold ring that could break walls. ■

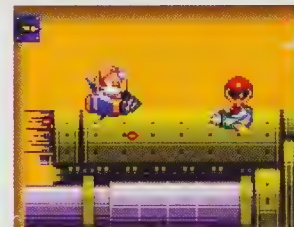
### Trivia

- *Tails' Skypatrol* was one of the hidden games in *Sonic Adventure DX* on the GameCube

## TAILS' ADVENTURE

テイルスアドベンチャー

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Aspect | **Genre:** Platformer/  
 Adventure | **Platform:** Game Gear | **Japan release:** September  
 22, 1995 | **US release:** November 1995 | **Europe release:**  
 September 1995 | **Number of players:** 1



*Tails' Adventure* put the famous fox at the heart of an adventure game with very original gameplay. While platforming was still present, it was overshadowed by exploration and puzzle elements, like in many 8-bit action RPGs. As the player found various items that enhanced Tails' skills and gave him new abilities, they would be able to explore more of the game's stages. They also had to avoid traps and obstacles that stood in Tails' way. The game's graphics and animation were excellent. In fact, this was probably one of the best "Sonic" titles on the Game Gear. ■

### Trivia

- Even though the Japanese and Western versions of the game were identical, their instruction manuals told two different stories. Because of localization problems, the story in the American and European versions' manual was much shorter and more basic.

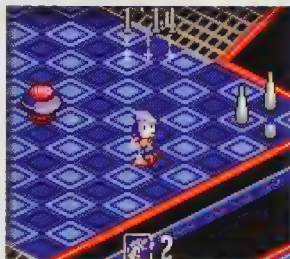




# SONIC LABYRINTH

ソニックラビリス

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Minato Giken | **Genre:** Puzzle  
**Platform:** Game Gear | **Japan release:** November 17, 1995 |  
**US release:** November 1995 | **Europe release:** October 1995 |  
**Number of players:** 1



Entirely in isometric 3D, *Sonic Labyrinth* gave players the opportunity to explore several levels in search of three keys that allowed them to advance to the next stage. After having his trademark sneakers stolen by Dr. Robotnik and replaced with "Slow-Down Boots", Sonic could only roll into a ball and use his trademark Spin Dash. As a result, *Labyrinth's* gameplay was rather unusual and mastering it was difficult. Also peculiar is the fact that, in most stages, there were no rings to help Sonic survive, since the keys more or less took on that role. Rings only appeared on steep slopes that directly preceded boss fights. This helped players grab an extra life before the inevitable showdown against the boss. ■

## Trivia

- *Sonic Labyrinth* was programmed by a small studio called Minato Giken, which later worked on the successful Game Gear port of *Dynamite Headdy*.
- Programming isometric 3D was easier to do on the Game Gear than on other gaming machines at the time.

# SONIC'S SCHOOLHOUSE

**Publisher:** Bap Interactive/SEGA | **Developer:** Orion Interactive  
**Genre:** Educational | **Platform:** PC | **Japan release:** None |  
**US release:** November 1996 | **Europe release:** None | **Number of players:** 1-2

Since Sonic was growing more and more popular and becoming an icon for children, he served as a great teacher in "edutainment" titles designed to help them learn spelling, reading, and mathematics. If kids worked hard, they were allowed to play two mini-games and visit a virtual zoo. The 3D engine used to move around came straight from a first-person shooter; quite a strange choice! Players had to be fast to catch the answers – some of which were written on balloons – and fire them at the hungry blackboard. This educational software was only released in the United States. ■



## Trivia

- Sonic's character model in this game was originally supposed to be used in the canceled *Sonic X-Treme*.
- This was the first Sonic game in which the hedgehog spoke English.

## SONIC THE FIGHTERS

ソニック・ザ・ファイターズ

**Also known as:** *Sonic Championship* | **Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** SEGA AM2 | **Genre:** Fighting | **Platform:** Arcade (SEGA Model 2B CRX) | **Japan release:** June 1996 | **US release:** July 1996 | **Europe release:** August 1996 | **Number of players:** 1-2



*Sonic The Fighters* was born from the experiments done by Masahiro Sugiyama, the character designer for SEGA's arcade division. He initially created the 3D versions of Sonic and Tails in order to include them in *Fighting Vipers*. The final result made quite an impression on many employees, including game designer Yu Suzuki. The project was quickly given the green light by the people in charge and, most of all, Yuji Naka.

A fighting game based on the hedgehog's universe, *Sonic The Fighters* used the "Model 2" system — the second generation of SEGA's 3D arcade boards — and it was developed in record time by AM2, Yu Suzuki's famous studio, under the supervision of Hiroshi Kataoka. Sonic Team only had a consulting role, signing off on several of the game's backgrounds and the overall aesthetic quality. As for the scenario, nothing had changed: chubby Dr. Eggman was back in action and he had put the finishing touches on the Death Egg II with Metal Sonic. Tails then offered to use his single-seater rocket, the Lunar Fox, to reach the impregnable fortress. However, it required energy from all eight Chaos Emeralds, and the last one was in Knuckles' possession... and as usual, he wanted to take Sonic's place. This provided a perfect reason to hold a fighting tournament and decide who would be the one to take a seat in the Lunar Fox and save the planet.

Built around the basics of SEGA's 3D fighting games at the time, the gameplay was slightly simplified where combos were concerned in order to be more appealing to the game's intended audience: women and children. One button for punches, one for kicks, another one for guarding, and that was it. The cast included mainstays Sonic and Tails, as well as six other playable characters: Knuckles, Amy Rose, Espio the Chameleon, Nack the Weasel, and finally, Bark the Polar Bear and Bean the Dynamite, who were inspired by the arcade game *Dynamite Dux*. Finally, the soundtrack was very dynamic and punchy. It was created by Maki Morrow and the famous Takenobu "Let's Go Away" Mitsuyoshi. ■





## Trivia

- Characters that were meant to be playable but were scrapped before the game's release were still kept in the game's data. You can view them by searching the game's program files.
- A Saturn version of *Sonic The Fighters* using the engine of *Fighters Megamix* was scheduled to be released. Unfortunately, SEGA did not have enough available programmers to complete this project.
- The only console port of *Sonic The Fighters* was included in *Sonic Gems Collection* for the PlayStation 2 and GameCube. All traces of the scrapped characters were, however, removed.
- The game's distribution went almost unnoticed in Japan because of its violence, which could have been detrimental to Sonic's image.
- For unknown reasons, Dr. Robotnik's name was misspelled in the game's opening sequence as "Dr. Robotonic".



# SPIN-OFF GAMES

## SONIC R

ソニックR

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Traveller's Tales/Sonic Team | **Genre:** Racing | **Platform:** Saturn, PC | **Japan release:** December 4, 1997 (Saturn) / November, 1998 (PC) | **US release:** November 18, 1997 (Saturn) / November 11, 1998 (PC) | **Europe release:** November 21, 1997 (Saturn) / November 1998 (PC) | **Number of players:** 1-2 (Saturn) / 1-4 (PC)



*Sonic R* was the result of a close collaboration between Sonic Team and the English studio Traveller's Tales (*Sonic 3D Blast*, *Leander*, etc.). The game's polygonal 3D graphics, regarded as a superb technical achievement, were incredibly colorful and detailed for their time. The hedgehog and his friends faced off in intense races, not in vehicles but on foot (except for Amy and Dr. Eggman). The races were timed to a tenth of a second, and the game's five courses were absolutely littered with secret passages and shortcuts. This freedom of exploration was uncommon in racing games and strongly encouraged players to go off the beaten track and see what they could find.

*Sonic R* was as much about racing as it was about frenzied exploration, and yet it was also a no-holds-barred competition to finish ahead of your opponents. It shook up the foundations of the series and offered tantalizing glimpses at ideas and elements that would later become prevalent in the *Sonic Adventure* series. Each racer had their own characteristics, and different racers accommodated varying styles of play. Sonic was still the fastest, but he was not the easiest to handle. Eggman was the everlasting colossus, slow but packing a lot of firepower, while Knuckles had a very useful skill: gliding. Additionally, all the characters could also jump.

Despite the inclusion of several extra game modes, the game lacked variety and, worst of all, was criminally short with little replayability. However, years after its release, it's still worth checking out for diehard Sonic fans, as there's no other game in the series quite like it. Its presence within *Sonic Gems Collection*, released on the GameCube and PS2, is probably the most convenient way for most people to rediscover this title. ■





## Trivia

- The soundtrack was composed by Richard Jacques and included rhythmic, dance-like pop tunes. Even today, it's quite different from the rest of the series' music.
- Traveller's Tales is a studio with many talented programmers. They proved this with *Sonic R* by using no less than 12 levels of transparency in order to achieve the smooth and progressive appearance of the backgrounds.



## SONIC SHUFFLE

ソニックシャッフル

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Hudson Soft/Sonic Team | **Genre:** Party | **Platform:** Dreamcast | **Japan release:** December 21, 2000 | **US release:** November 14, 2000 | **Europe release:** March 9, 2001 | **Number of players:** 1-4



Do you like Sonic? Do you like board games too? If your answer to both questions is "yes", *Sonic Shuffle* might be the perfect game for you. Created by Hudson Soft, the same developer behind Nintendo's *Mario Party* series, *Sonic Shuffle* took *Mario Party*'s winning formula and adapted it to Sonic's universe. At its heart, the game was designed with four-player competitive play (both team-based and free for all) in mind. Battling against Void to find the pieces of the Precioustone and help Lumina the fairy, players progressed through the game by using cards to advance on a game board. The cards worked in much the same way as in the card game *War*, and determined everything from players' progression to handicaps. There were about 50 mini-games in total, and many of them could be played again via the photo album once they had been unlocked. Overall, *Sonic Shuffle* was a fun multiplayer game, albeit a slightly slow one. ■

### Trivia

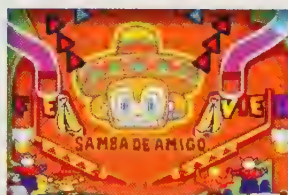
- The eight characters (Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Big the Cat, E-102 Gamma, Chao, and Super Sonic) each have specific special abilities.
- The game was supervised by Akinori Nishiyama, the scriptwriter of *Sonic Adventure*, and Yuji Uekawa, the creator of *Ristar*, among others.



# SONIC PINBALL PARTY

ソニックピンボールパーティー

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team/Jupiter | **Genre:** Pinball | **Platform:** Game Boy Advance | **Japan release:** July 17, 2003 | **US release:** June 1, 2003 | **Europe release:** October 31, 2003 | **Number of players:** 1-4



Not many people know this, but Sonic was conceived to have the same behavior as a pinball from the very beginning. After *Sonic Spinball* on the Genesis, there really wasn't anything surprising about seeing him in another pinball game. With tables based on Sonic, *NIGHTS into Dreams*, and the arcade hit *Samba de Amigo*, this pinball simulation on the Game Boy Advance managed to combine a variety of SEGA content with the immediate fun of pinball machines. While the boards were rather typical pinball tables and didn't feature any big novelties, the ball's physics in terms of trajectory and bouncing were particularly realistic. But the icing on the cake was the fact that, for their respective tables, the music was taken directly from the games *NIGHTS into Dreams* and *Samba de Amigo* for the player's listening pleasure. Only the maracas were missing... ■

## Trivia

- On the Sonic board, if you managed to launch Sonic into a hidden hole three times, he would change into Tails, then Knuckles, then Amy, and then finally back into Sonic.
- Each level had a specific objective, except for the *Samba de Amigo* board, where the only real goal was to get the highest score possible.



# SONIC BATTLE

ソニックバトル

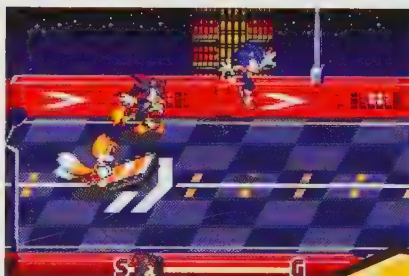
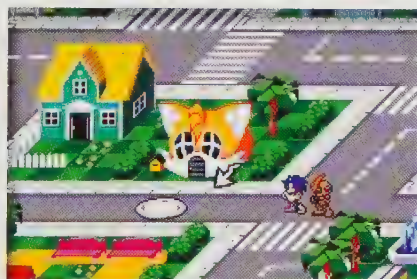
**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Action/Fighting | **Platform:** Game Boy Advance | **Japan release:** December 4, 2003 | **US release:** January 5, 2004 | **Europe release:** February 27, 2004 | **Number of players:** 1-4



Produced by Yuji Naka and directed by Tomoyuki Hayashi, *Sonic Battle* was a fighting game that took place in an isometric 3D environment with 2D characters. Four thousand years ago, a terrible weapon called the Gizoid was created by an ancient civilization. It was discovered by Professor Gerald Robotnik, but it was of no use to him, so he abandoned the android. His grandson, Dr. Ivo Robotnik – that is, Eggman – discovered it years later but also abandoned the robot, who finally found shelter with Sonic. Once it was discovered that the mysterious android – who Sonic named Emerl (derived from "Emerald") – was able to imitate its adversaries' techniques, it became Eggman's target. The scenario was centered around Emerl, and with each battle, the player gained access to new moves and combinations.

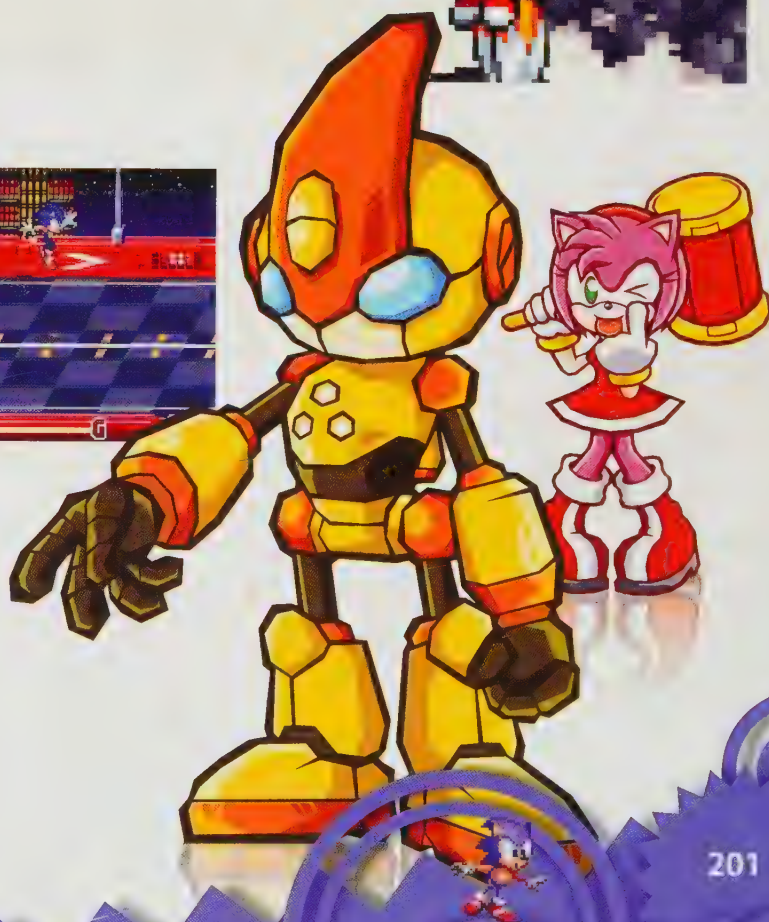
With plenty of game modes, four-player battles, mini-games, fun gameplay, and good replayability, *Sonic Battle* had a lot to offer. The game also featured a dozen playable characters and just as many stages. Story Mode saw the game's narrative play out between fights and required the player to strategically customize Emerl's movement and attack capabilities, but it was undoubtedly Battle Mode that made the game really interesting. In it, players could face off with the game's AI or their own friends in frantic four-player battles. Overall, the battle system had a lot of depth and was quite technical, with many different melee and long-range attacks available to experiment with. A different but altogether great outing for Sonic, this Game Boy Advance title should not be missed. ■





## Trivia

- Yuji Uekawa, the Sonic series' usual character designer, did not do the art for *Sonic Battle*.
- *Sonic Battle* was the only Game Boy Advance game to include Shadow the Hedgehog.
- Even though both hedgehogs are generally equal in terms of speed, Shadow is faster than Sonic in this game.
- The animation used for Knuckles' walking is similar to his running animation in *Sonic & Knuckles*.
- *Sonic Battle*'s story continues in *Sonic Advance 3*, with the appearance of the robot Gemerl, built from Emerl's data.



## SEGA SUPERSTARS

セガ スーパースターズ

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Mini-games | **Platform:** PlayStation 2 |  
**Japan release:** November 11, 2004 | **US release:** November 2, 2004 | **Europe release:** October 22, 2004 |  
**Number of players:** 1



Produced by Yuji Naka and supervised by Yoshihisa Hashimoto, *SEGA Superstars* is a compilation of mini-games designed specifically for the PlayStation 2's EyeToy, a kind of webcam used for the detection of movements and a precursor to the recent wave of motion controllers. There was a total of 12 games, all based on famous titles from SEGA's catalog. For instance, the mini-game featuring Sonic was based on the same concept as *Sonic Rush*'s special stages, where the player's movements controlled the hedgehog in a frantic race inside a tunnel. *The House of the Dead*'s mini-game gave you the opportunity to fight hordes of zombies with a shotgun, while (hopefully) sparing the innocents. Other titles' mini-games, like *Samba de Amigo*, *Space Channel 5*, and even *Super Monkey Ball*, adapted their source game's main concept to this type of slightly simplistic motion control. In the end, there was a lot of variety, and with this game, players even found themselves breaking a sweat and getting some exercise. ■

### Trivia

- Several mini-games include additional modes that can be unlocked through perseverance, such as the "Shadow mode" for Sonic's game.
- *SEGA Superstars* used the EyeToy in a more complex fashion than Sony's titles to that point had by using a background detection system, instead of just focusing on the moving elements in the camera's field of vision.



# SONIC RIDERS

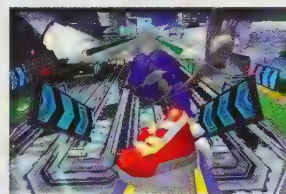
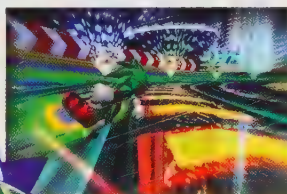
ソニックライダーズ

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Racing | **Platform:** GameCube, Xbox, PlayStation 2, PC | **Japan release:** February 23, 2006 (GCN, Xbox, PS2) | **US release:** February 21, 2006 (GCN, Xbox, PS2) / November 17, 2006 (PC) | **Europe release:** March 17, 2006 (GCN, Xbox, PS2) / November 24, 2006 (PC) | **Number of players:** 1-4



*Sonic Riders* is a unique title in the Sonic series. It was a racing game featuring hover boards, much like those seen in the movie *Back to the Future Part II*. *Sonic Drift*'s karts and *Sonic R*'s running were things of the past; for Sonic and his friends, gliding was all the rage now. The goal of tracking down a Chaos Emerald was only an excuse to hold a series of extreme races on several intense courses. *Sonic Riders* boasted a roster of 17 playable characters, each with multiple skills — quite a lot of content.

The rings obtained during races allowed players to buy things such as better hover boards. Fast and furious, *Sonic Riders* — directed by Kenjiro Morimoto — even included a four-player mode via split-screen multiplayer, perfect for an evening of fun! There were quite a lot of moves to be mastered too, requiring some focus. Inspired by the "good side/dark side" setup initiated by *Sonic Adventure 2* (you play as the good characters before being able to control the bad guys), *Sonic Riders* was an interesting spin-off game. ■



## Trivia

- This was the first Sonic game to feature an animated opening sequence since *Sonic CD* in 1993.
- *Sonic Riders* was the last Sonic game to appear on the Xbox and GameCube.

# SONIC RIDERS: ZERO GRAVITY

ソニック・ライダー・シューティング・スター・ストーリー

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Racing | **Platform:** Wii, PlayStation 2 | **Japan release:** January 17, 2008 (Wii) | **US release:** January 8, 2008 (Wii, PS2) | **Europe release:** February 22, 2008 (Wii, PS2) | **Number of players:** 1-4

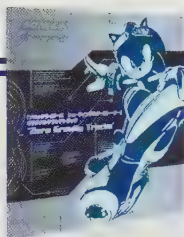


A direct sequel to *Sonic Riders*, *Zero Gravity* – produced by Kenjiro Morimoto – was a racing game that pitted the player against robots that have gone mad. The scenario was centered around a meteor that fell to Earth and could affect gravity. As the gameplay concept remained unchanged, the game was still focused on sliding around breathtaking slopes on a hover board. With no less than 19 characters battling it out on the winding slopes, *Zero Gravity*'s gameplay could get intense very quickly. Once again, rings were strewn about the tracks and were needed to purchase hover board enhancements, including extra boosts and the ability to do tricks. Each track had some useful shortcuts, but the game was so fast that the developers added the ability to slow down time in order to anticipate turns. Even though it was fairly interesting, *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity* lacked polish and was a little eccentric, but the refined graphics complemented complex and flexible gameplay. ■

## Trivia

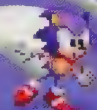
- One of the game's playable characters was none other than the main monkey Amigo from *Samba de Amigo*.
- *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity* is the fifth game in the Sonic series to place the hedgehog in a racing game. It is preceded by *Sonic Drift*, *Sonic Drift 2*, *Sonic R*, and *Sonic Riders*.
- In Japan, the game's name is *Sonic Riders Shooting Star Story*.





## Soundtrack

Japanese musician and *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity* composer Fumie Kumatani has a long and illustrious history at SEGA, having worked for the company since 1996. She worked on the music for *NIGHTS into Dreams*, *Burning Rangers*, *Sonic Adventure*, and more. She worked with Kenichi Tokoi (*Daytona USA*, *Sonic Jam*, *Space Channel 5*, etc.), on the soundtrack for *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity*, which was released as a CD album sold only in Japan. It included a total of 23 tracks, and some of them were remixed specifically for the album. Its name? *Sonic Riders Shooting Star Story Original Soundtrack "Zero Gravity Tracks"*.



# SPIN-OFF GAMES

## MARIO & SONIC AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES™

マリオ&ソニック AT 北京オリンピック

**Publisher:** Nintendo (Japan), SEGA (US, Europe) | **Developer:** SEGA Sports | **Genre:** Sports | **Platform:** Wii, DS | **Japan release:** November 22, 2007 (Wii) / January 17, 2008 (DS) | **US release:** November 6, 2007 (Wii) / January 22, 2008 (DS) | **Europe release:** November 23, 2007 (Wii) / February 8, 2008 (DS) | **Number of players:** 1-4



It was an incredible and inconceivable story: Sonic and Mario, sworn enemies, on the cover of the same game. What better than an international event – the 2008 Beijing Olympics – to seal their reconciliation? "The Olympics have always been synonymous with fair play," said Scott Steinberg, former vice president of marketing at SEGA of America. "We couldn't have written a better story." The game included an impressive 20 events, including the 100-meter dash, archery, 4x100-meter freestyle relay, pole vault, table tennis, and plenty more. The various mini-games made good use of the Wii Remote.

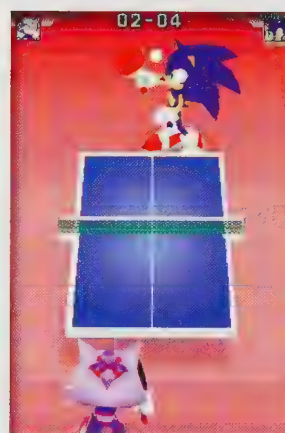
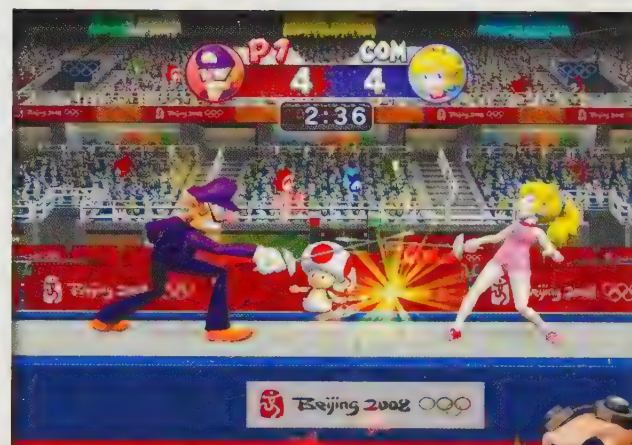


But it was the cast of eight Mushroom Kingdom denizens alongside eight Sonic characters that made all the difference. In fact, according to Simon Jeffery, who was the president of SEGA of America at the time, the idea of a crossover SEGA/Nintendo game probably dates back to the 1990s. But that couldn't have happened back then, as both companies – who were both still console manufacturers at the time – were direct rivals. They would have to wait until 2001 and the end of the Dreamcast, SEGA's last gaming machine, for negotiations to begin. The first bridge between both video game giants was crossed in 2003 with *F-Zero GX*, a SEGA-developed installment of Nintendo's beloved racing franchise.

The next step took place in 2006, when SEGA secured the video game rights to the Beijing Olympics. As part of the agreement, one of the requirements established by the International Olympic Committee was that SEGA's game must transmit the values of sports to as many people as possible, especially children. To do this, SEGA's idea was to develop two games: a serious, realistic one (it would simply be called "Beijing 2008") and another, more fun one, featuring Sonic and his friends. But why stop there? SEGA took this opportunity to ask Nintendo about including Mario. Nintendo liked the idea so much that they offered to lend the series' whole cast to the project, and sent Shigeru Miyamoto, the prestigious father of Mario, Zelda, and others, to supervise the project.

Once again, according to Jeffery, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™* marked the beginning of a new era for the hedgehog. His new image forged by this title put Sonic more in touch with the times and players' expectations. At any rate, SEGA and Nintendo apparently hit the bull's eye with their long-awaited collaboration, as the title sold nearly eight million copies on the Wii, and three million copies on the DS. It was the highest-selling Sonic console game of all time. ■





## Trivia

- The characters Silver, Jet, Donkey Kong, and Birdo were originally scheduled to be in the game, but in the end they were dropped from the cast. The judo event was also dropped at the last moment.
- Yuji Naka explained that if Sonic does not swim in most of his adventures, it was because he thought (wrongly) that hedgehogs could not swim. Thanks to this game's swimming events, Sonic was able to prove himself a capable swimmer.
- For Mike Hayes, former president of SEGA West, this game marked the end of the age-old battle where "Nintendo was the Beatles and SEGA, the Rolling Stones."



## SONIC CHRONICLES: THE DARK BROTHERHOOD

ソニッククロニクル 闇次元からの侵略者

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** BioWare | **Genre:** RPG | **Platform:** DS | **Japan release:** August 6, 2009 | **US release:** September 30, 2008 | **Europe release:** September 26, 2008 | **Number of players:** 1



For many fans, the only other thing almost as outlandish or unlikely as Sonic appearing in a title with Mario was the idea of the hedgehog starring in his own RPG. But then it happened! This surprising title came from a friendship born in 2003 between Simon Jeffery (then the president of LucasArts) and Ray Muzyka (a big fan of Sonic and a co-founder of the RPG giant BioWare) while they were working on the game *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*. In 2006, Jeffery became the president of SEGA of America, and Muzyka thought about getting involved in the portable gaming market. It was only natural for them to meet and talk shop. In June 2007, they announced *Sonic Chronicles: The Dark Brotherhood*.

The first problem for the developers: rhythm. "Sonic is all about speed, while by nature, the role-playing game is often slow," lead programmer Brook Bakay explained. "We tried to speed things up." This would become apparent in the game's battles; even though they were turn-based, players had to tap the DS' touch screen with rhythmic timing in order to launch special attacks. This interactive and fun approach was also found in the game's exploration phases, in which some secondary characters could fly and climb walls, like in traditional Sonic platformers.

According to Muzyka, these secondary characters were the game's main strength. "The player's choices are always at the core of our games, most notably the choice of his companions, which can completely change the outcome of your game," Muzyka explained. "And we are also trying to transmit emotions. In order to do so, the player has to become attached to certain characters and hate others." Surprisingly, translating the universe of what is mostly a platforming series into a role-playing game was not that hard. Mark Darrah, *Sonic Chronicles'* producer, explains: "When you dig a little further, you realize that Sonic has an extremely rich universe. The previous games, the comic books, and the cartoons were an excellent starting point for us," said Darrah.

At the beginning of the tale, a mysterious group called the "Marauders" kidnapped Knuckles and stole the Chaos Emeralds as well. With Sonic and his friends determined to rescue the red echidna, the adventure began in some familiar environments within Sonic's world. But the story eventually took the team to a parallel dimension called the Twilight Cage, where the evil Emperor Ix and his clan were hatching a dark scheme. It was a good opportunity for players to discover new characters and places within the Sonic universe, but also for BioWare to bring one of their typically darker stories into Sonic's usually cheery universe. ■







- Dr. Eggman is called Robotnik here, like in the Western versions of the first Sonic games. Maybe all of the game developers on the title were American?
- To fit all the hand-drawn backgrounds on a DS game card, the developers had to cut them into small pieces and progressively load them with a streaming system according to Sonic's movements. It was quite a challenge, considering how fast he can run!
- By the ending, which shows the return of a healthy and triumphant Robotnik, BioWare stated that they were ready to develop *Sonic Chronicles 2*. However, such a sequel has yet to materialize.

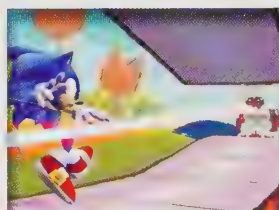
## SUPER SMASH BROS. BRAWL

大乱闘スマッシュブラザーズX

**Publisher:** Nintendo | **Developer:** Sora | **Genre:** Fighting | **Platform:** Wii | **Japan release:** January 31, 2008 | **US release:** March 9, 2008 | **Europe release:** June 27, 2008 | **Number of players:** 1-4



Designed and written by Masahiro Sakurai and Kazushige Nojima respectively, *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* was a smorgasbord for Nintendo fans. The third installment of a series that needs no introduction, this latest game gathered almost 40 iconic characters from prestigious Nintendo series such as *Zelda*, *Metroid*, *Kirby*, *Kid Icarus*, and *Mother*. Yet two third-party guest stars were invited to the party as well: Solid Snake (*Metal Gear*) and the fearless Sonic himself. The game's official Japanese website had run a poll asking players to pick which characters and music they wanted to be included in the game. With a landslide victory, SEGA's mascot reached the number one position and was rewarded with a place in *Brawl*, to the delight of fans everywhere. On October 10, 2007, it was announced that the blue hedgehog would take part in the all-star Nintendo fighting game. ■



### Trivia

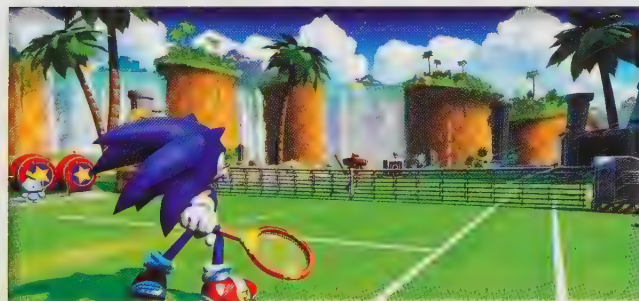
- Early on, Nintendo asked SEGA if Sonic could be included in the game, but the Haneda company refused. It was only later, when the development of *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* was nearly finished, that SEGA changed its mind. This is why the game's release was delayed.
- Of course, because it is a fighting game, the hedgehog can transform into Super Sonic and use his all-powerful form to great effect.



# SEGA SUPERSTARS TENNIS

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sumo Digital | **Genre:** Sports |  
**Platform:** PS2, PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, DS | **Japan release:** None |  
**US release:** March 18, 2008 | **Europe release:** March 17, 2008 |  
**Number of players:** 1-8

Even if it was not really a Sonic game, it would be wrong not to mention *SEGA Superstars Tennis*, a crazy and colorful tennis "simulation" with mini-games and special character appearances. Sonic's universe is among the myriad of beloved SEGA settings represented on the game's tennis courts, including Green Hill Zone and Scrap Brain Zone. ■



## Trivia

- Before they played tennis, Sonic, NIGHTS, Amigo, Ulala, and other SEGA mainstays had already been featured in mini-games played with the EyeToy, the PlayStation 2's digital camera peripheral, in *SEGA Superstars* (2004).
- Sumo Digital was also the studio that made the Xbox 360, PSP, and PC versions of the hardcore tennis title *Virtua Tennis 3*, which was a prime example of a serious, realistic tennis game.

# MARIO & SONIC AT THE OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES™

マリオ&ソニック AT バンクーバーオリンピック

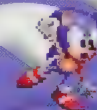
**Japanese title:** *Mario & Sonic at the Vancouver Olympics™* |  
**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** SEGA Sports | **Genre:** Sports |  
**Platform:** Wii, DS | **Japan release:** November 5, 2009 | **US release:**  
October 13, 2009 | **Europe release:** October 16, 2009 | **Number of**  
**players:** 1-4



After the unprecedented success of their adventures at the Beijing Olympics, Mario and Sonic were not about to miss the Vancouver games! Actually, SEGA's Japanese studios (with help once again from Shigeru Miyamoto, the well-respected father of the Mario and Zelda series) started work on this title as soon as the first game was done. Besides an extended cast that included Metal Sonic and Silver, this sequel added some new features, like the appearance of bosses and Wii Balance Board support for certain events. ■

## Trivia

- Even though Super Sonic was not included in the cast of playable characters, a Mii costume of him could be unlocked, giving your avatar the same skills as the nearly-invincible hedgehog.



## SONIC & SEGA ALL-STARS RACING

ソニック&セガ オールスターズレーシング

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sumo Digital | **Genre:** Racing | **Platform:** PS3, Xbox 360, Wii, DS, PC, arcade, iOS | **Japanese release:** None | **US release:** February 23, 2010 | **Europe release:** February 26, 2010 | **Number of players:** 1-8



Once *SEGA Superstars Tennis* was completed, SEGA asked English studio Sumo Digital to think about ideas for a sequel. Paintball, fighting, and skateboarding were considered, but in the end, with their experience porting *OutRun 2* and *OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast*, the team at Sumo Digital suggested a car racing game, which caught the SEGA executives' attention. According to producer Steve Lycett, in the first build of the game, Sonic was on foot, Dr. Eggman was in a giant robot, Tails was in a plane, and Gilius, the dwarf from *Golden Axe*, rode on the back of monstrous parrot. Unfortunately, these turned out to be huge mistakes and the game was anything but fun in this state. First off, a battle between a small hedgehog and a huge biplane was unfair. Besides that, even though the developers wanted to focus on drifting, they were not sure how to make a parrot drift.

So they switched gears and kept the cars, turned the planes into more modest hovercrafts, added motorbikes and, best of all, added weapons and items to pick up. Finally, at SEGA's request, the special moves from *SEGA Superstars Tennis* returned, giving racers in last place a chance to seek revenge and turn the tables. This idea was so well-received that the game was nearly renamed "Sonic Revenge Racing". In the end, thanks to Sumo Digital's experience with "real" racing games, *All-Stars Racing* ended up having unexpected depth with its technical gameplay, which made the game even better. ■



### Trivia

- The cast was supposed to include Mario, Segata Sanshiro (the hero of the Saturn's advertising campaign), and even the extraterrestrials ToeJam & Earl. Because of popular demand, however, it was NIGHTS who made the cut, acting as the flagman.
- When *All-Stars Racing* was released, it had been 20 years since gamers last saw Alex Kidd. Even though he was SEGA's mascot in the 1980s, Sonic's success forced him into an early retirement.





# SONIC FREE RIDERS

ソニック フリーライダーズ

**Publisher:** SEGA | **Developer:** Sonic Team | **Genre:** Racing |  
**Platform:** Xbox 360 | **Japan release:** November 12, 2010 | **US**  
**release:** November 4, 2010 | **Europe release:** November 10,  
2010 | **Number of players:** 1-8



Quite the thrill seeker, Sonic broke out his Extreme Gear again shortly after *Sonic Riders* and *Zero Gravity*, this time to slide down the snowy slopes of the Xbox 360. This time, traditional pad-based controls were thrown out and replaced with Kinect-based motion controls. Players just had to move their hips to make their character turn in the desired direction, and jumping would make their on-screen racer leap as well. Even though the concept was sound, the severe lag in the controls ruined the experience. ■

## Trivia

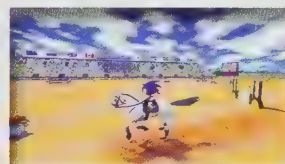
• *Free Riders* was the first title in the *Sonic Riders* series to be released exclusively on a Microsoft console.

# MARIO & SONIC AT THE LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC GAMES™

マリオ&ソニック AT ロンドンオリンピック

**Publisher:** Nintendo (Japan), SEGA (USA, Europe) |  
**Developer:** SEGA | **Genre:** Sports | **Platform:** Wii, 3DS |  
**Japan release:** November 2011 (Wii) / February 2012  
(3DS) | **US release:** November 15, 2011 (Wii) / February, 2012  
(3DS) | **Europe release:** November 18, 2011 (Wii) / February  
2012 (3DS) | **Number of players:** 1-4

The third time was a charm! Following the success of the previous titles, Mario and Sonic – both buddies and rivals by now – were at it again for the London Olympics. Soccer, beach volleyball, tennis, canoeing, parallel bars, shooting, synchronized swimming... the lineup of events was both robust and varied. But how could it not be? After all, for the franchise's first appearance on the 3DS, SEGA offered dozens of brand new events, some of which uniquely supported the 3DS' built-in gyroscope and microphone. ■



## Trivia

• This is the first *Mario & Sonic* title where the hedgehog appears with his new voice, courtesy of Roger Craig Smith.



# CHARACTERS

200cm

200cm

180cm

150cm

110cm

100cm

90cm





180cm



## SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

ソニック・ザ・ヘッジホッグ



**Also known as:** ソニック・ザ・ヘッジホッグ [Sonikku za Hejjihoggu], Blue Blur.

**Species:** Hedgehog

**Gender:** Male

**Weight:** 77 lbs.

**Height:** 3 feet, 4 inches

**Status:** Hero, SEGA's mascot

**First appearance:** *Sonic The Hedgehog* (Genesis, 1991)

**Other appearances:** *Rad Mobile* (cameo), *Sonic Eraser*, *Sonic The Hedgehog* (GG), *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* (Gen. and GG), *Sonic Chaos*, *Sonic Spinball*, *Sonic CD*, *Sonic The Hedgehog 3*, *Sonic & Knuckles*, *Sonic Drift*, *Sonic Triple Trouble*, *Sonic Drift 2*, *Sonic Labyrinth*, *Sonic The Hedgehog's Gameworld*, *Sonic 3D Blast*, *Sonic Blast*, *Gale Racer* (cameo), *Sonic The Fighters*, *Sonic R*, *Sonic The Hedgehog Pocket Adventure*, *Sonic Adventure*, *Sonic Shuffle*, *Sonic Adventure 2*, *Sonic Adventure 2 Battle*, *Sonic Advance*, *Sonic Advance 2*, *Sonic Battle*, *Sonic Pinball Party*, *Sonic Adventure DX*, *Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg* (cameo), *Sonic Advance 3*, *Sonic Heroes*, *SEGA Superstars*, *Shadow The Hedgehog*, *Sonic Rush*, *Sonic Riders*, *Sonic The Hedgehog* (2006), *Sonic Rivals*, *Sonic and the Secret Rings*, *Sonic Rush Adventure*, *Sonic Rivals 2*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™*, *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity*, *Super Smash Bros. Brawl*, *SEGA Superstars Tennis*, *Sonic Chronicles*, *Samba de Amigo Wii* (cameo), *Sonic Unleashed*, *Sonic and the Black Knight*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™*, *Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing*, *Sonic Classic Collection*, *Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode I*, *Sonic Free Riders*, *Sonic Colors*, *Sonic Generations*, *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™*, *Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode II*, *Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode Metal*, *Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed*

**Specialty:** Running at supersonic speed





*Sonic The Hedgehog (Genesis, 1991)*

As the hero of one of gaming's most beloved series and SEGA's timeless mascot, Sonic launched a new craze in 1991, the year of his first appearance on the Genesis, Game Gear, and Master System. With his rather aggressive looks and a personality that many would call haughty, the blue hedgehog quickly became the idol of a whole generation, standing in stark contrast to the soft and toned down image of Mario. With more than four million copies of the original Genesis version of *Sonic The Hedgehog* sold worldwide, the icon created by Naoto Ōshima, Yuji Naka, and Hirokazu Yasuhara became synonymous with the SEGA brand.

The fastest thing alive, Sonic can run faster than the speed of sound – that is to say, 768 miles per hour! With that kind of speed, it's no wonder that Sonic left his rivals in the dust and became the fastest video game hero of all time! Yet the hedgehog is also known – and loved – for his trademark cool attitude, youthful energy, and relaxed demeanor. A staunch defender of freedom, he stands steadfastly against his nemesis Dr. Eggman and anyone else who would do the world harm. Though he can be hot-headed and quick to anger, his sense of justice is unmatched and he will always do everything in his power to help those in need.

Very little is known about his past, other than the fact that his passion for adventure and risk-taking led him to leave his native land and travel the world. He does not seem to have a home, although his initial adventures all took place on islands, including South Island (*Sonic The Hedgehog*), Westside Island (*Sonic The Hedgehog 2*), and Angel Island (*Sonic The Hedgehog 3*). As an enthusiastic daredevil with boundless energy, he fits the image of a teenage hedgehog, oblivious to the very real danger he constantly faces as a defender of peace. This confident, devil-may-care disposition has made Sonic

a universally beloved, relatable character and a timeless idol who has appealed to multiple generations of gamers.

As a lover of nature, this tree-hugging hedgehog spends much of his time rescuing animals that the nefarious Dr. Eggman has captured and turned into his robot slaves. Dr. Eggman has also obsessed with the Chaos Emeralds, mysterious artifacts that can distort space and time, provide nearly unlimited power to machines, or enable their user to transform into a far more powerful, nearly-invincible version of themselves. Fortunately, Sonic is never alone in his fight against evil, and he can count on the support of several faithful and loyal companions...



# CHARACTERS



1991 — Sonic The Hedgehog

1992 — Sonic The Hedgehog 2

1993 — Sonic The Hedgehog Chaos

100cm



■ C:100/M:40

■ M:20/Y:30

■ W:100

■ K:100

■ C:10/M:90/Y:60

■ M:20/Y:100

■ C:10/M:70/Y:60/K:40  
<Shoe sole>





1993 — Sonic Spinball



1993 — Sonic CD



1994 — Sonic The Hedgehog 3

## The evolution of Sonic the Hedgehog

Pale blue at first, Sonic gradually became a brighter blue, more in line with his fiery personality. Originally, he ran with the soles of his feet tilted inward, and didn't run with them tilted outward until later.



# CHARACTERS



1995 — Sonic Drift



1995 — Sonic Labyrinth



1996 — Sonic 3D Blast

## Genesis vs. Master System/Game Gear

With its 16-bit architecture, the Genesis was obviously able to display better, more detailed sprite images, hence the visual difference between the 8- and 16-bit Sonics.





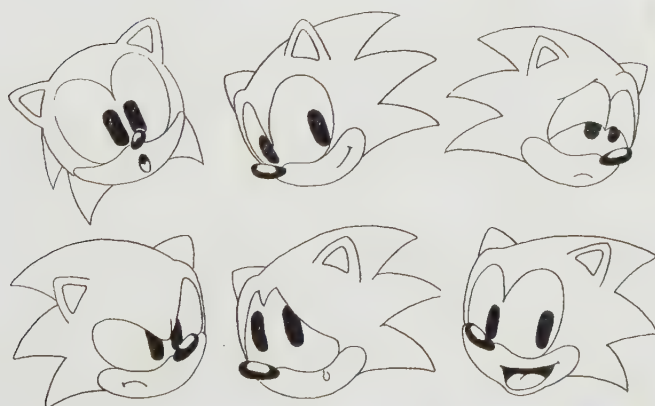


1996 — Sonic The Fighters

1997 — Sonic Jam



## SONIC HEAD CONSTRUCTION



# CHARACTERS

## Hair in the wind

During his initial presentation to the SEGA teams, many programmers thought that Sonic's hair was composed of a series of spikes. But actually, when you look at the character from behind, you can see that there are three rows of spikes on different levels. Yuji Naka has always regretted that there were no views of Sonic from behind in his first adventure. To make up for this, he decided to create 3D bonus stages in *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* in order to show the public what the hedgehog's hair really looked like.







2001 — Sonic Advance

2003 — Sonic Battle

2007 — Sonic and the Secret Rings

## Slow and steady wins the race

If there's anything Sonic can't get enough of, it's speed. As such, he cannot stand still for more than a few seconds. Depending on the game, simply set your controller down for several seconds, and the hedgehog will soon tap his feet impatiently, check his watch, and/or glare at the player as if to say, "What's taking you so long?! Let's get a move on already!"



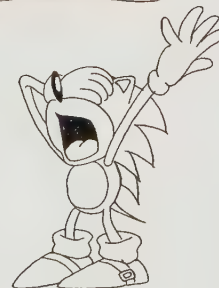
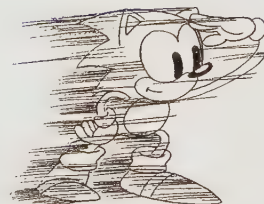
Sprites of Sonic from the first  
Genesis titles.

# CHARACTERS



2008 — Sonic Unleashed

2010 — Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing







2010 — Sonic Free Riders



2011 — Sonic Generations



2011 — Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™

## Trivia

- The "Sonic hedgehog homolog" (or SHH) is one of the three proteins involved in the mammalian signaling pathway family called "hedgehog". It plays a central role in regulating vertebrate organogenesis, such as in the organization of the brain and the growth of digits on limbs.
- In order to adapt to the concept of *Sonic Spinball*, a pinball game, the teams at SEGA Technical Institute reduced Sonic's size to make the different tables bigger and more impressive.
- Sonic's creators have admitted that the hedgehog is a very bad swimmer, and this fact can be seen in several of his games. Sonic is not afraid of water, but he has a tendency to sink right to the bottom of any body of water he enters. In order to breathe, Sonic must find air bubbles.
- Sonic was the first character in the series to use the Chaos Emeralds to transform into an all-powerful form when he became Super Sonic in *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* on the Genesis.
- Sonic's favorite food? Chili dogs!



# CHARACTERS

## MILES 'TAILS' PROWER

マイルス "テイルス" パウアー



**Also known as:** マイルス・パウアー [Mairusu Paua], テイルス [Teirusu]

**Species:** Fox

**Gender:** Male

**Weight:** 44 lbs.

**Height:** 2 feet, 4 inches

**Status:** Sonic's best friend

**First appearance:**

*Sonic The Hedgehog 2* (Genesis, 1992)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* (GG), *Sonic CD*, *Sonic Chaos*, *SEGA Sonic Cosmo Fighter*, *Sonic The Hedgehog 3*, *Sonic & Knuckles*, *Gale Racer* (cameo), *Sonic Drift*, *Sonic Drift 2*, *Knuckles' Chaotix* (cameo), *Tails' Skypatrol*, *Tails' Adventure*, *Tails and the Music Maker*, *Sonic Triple Trouble*, *Sonic Spinball*, *Sonic 3D Blast*, *Sonic The Fighters*, *Sonic R*, *Sonic Adventure*, *Sonic Pocket Adventure*, *Sonic Shuffle*, *Sonic Adventure 2*, *Sonic Advance*, *Sonic Advance 2*, *Sonic Heroes*, *Sonic Battle*, *Sonic Advance 3*, *Shadow the Hedgehog*, *Sonic Rush*, *Sonic Riders*, *Sonic The Hedgehog* (2006), *Sonic Rivals*, *Sonic and the Secret Rings*, *Sonic Rush Adventure*, *Sonic Rivals 2*, *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™*, *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* (cameo, trophy), *SEGA Superstars Tennis*, *Sonic Chronicles*, *Sonic Unleashed*, *Sonic and the Black Knight*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™*, *Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing*, *Sonic Colors*, *Sonic Free Riders*, *Sonic Generations*, *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™*, *Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode II*, *Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode Metal*, *Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed*

**Specialty:** Flying for short periods of time





*Sonic The Hedgehog 2* (Genesis, 1992)

Sonic's best friend, Tails, was the product of an internal contest held at SEGA to give the hedgehog a teammate. A big fan of the blue blur and an accomplished mechanic, this adorable fox never hesitates to aid Sonic in all his adventures by creating useful vehicles, some of which run on the energy of the Chaos Emeralds. His first appearance in *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* is an early example of the duo's unshakable friendship. The circumstances of their first meeting are still unclear, since they were different in the Japanese and American *Sonic 2* manuals.

Tails was inspired by the Japanese legend of the fox with nine tails — the kitsune — which can also be found in the *Naruto* anime series. To express his young age and resulting lack of experience, his creator, Yasushi Yamaguchi, only gave him two tails. While Tails can fly by spinning them like helicopter rotors, he can only fly for so long before he needs to rest.

Unlike Sonic, who is perpetually hyperactive, the small fox is a little calmer and more controlled. He spends most of his time locked up in his workshop and loves mechanics, though he has not completely mastered the field yet. His inventions have a tendency to malfunction, such as his plane, the Tornado. But he can always count on Sonic's help, both in the games and in the anime film *Sonic The Hedgehog: The Movie*, where his turbo-jet surfboard was not working properly at all. ■



## Trivia

- The name "Miles 'Tails' Prower" is a play on "miles per hour". The "Tails" part of his name was added by American SEGA executives, but Yasushi Yamaguchi, the fox's creator, did not like it at all. So on each illustration of the fox, he added the signature "Miles Prower" and managed to convince SEGA to name this new character "Miles 'Tails' Prower".



# CHARACTERS



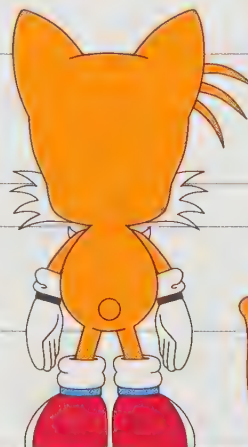
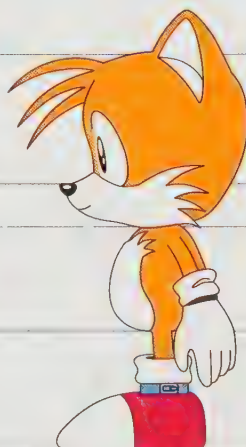
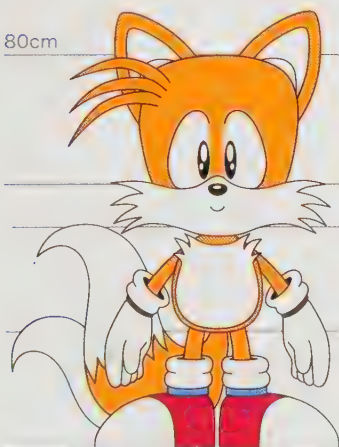
1992 — Sonic The Hedgehog 2

1994 — Sonic The Hedgehog 3

1994 — Tails and the Music Maker

SONIC size

80cm



M:40/Y:100

W:100

K:100

C:10/M:90/Y:60

C:100/M:40

K:70

K:20

C:10/M:70/Y:60/K:40  
<Shoe sole>





1995 — Tails' Skypatrol



1996 — Sonic 3D Blast



1996 — Sonic The Fighters



1997 — Sonic Jam





1998 — Sonic Adventure



2002 — Sonic Advance 2



2003 — Sonic Battle



2006 — Sonic Riders





2008 — Sonic Chronicles



2009 — Sonic and the Black Knight



2010 — Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing



2011 — Sonic Generations





## KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA

ナックルズ・ザ・エキドゥナ



**Also known as:** ナックルズ・ザ・エキドゥナ [Nakkurusu za Ekiduna]

**Species:** Echidna

**Gender:** Male

**Weight:** 94 lbs.

**Height:** 3 feet, 4 inches

**Status:** Sonic's good friend and rival

**First appearance:**

*Sonic The Hedgehog 3* (Genesis, 1994)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic & Knuckles*, *Sonic Triple Trouble*, *Sonic Drift 2*, *Knuckles' Chaotix*, *Sonic The Fighters*, *Sonic Blast*, *Sonic R*, *Sonic 3D Blast*, *Sonic Adventure*, *Sonic Pocket Adventure*, *Sonic Shuffle*, *Sonic Advance*, *Sonic Pinball Party*, *Sonic Adventure 2*, *Sonic Advance 2*, *Sonic Battle*, *Sonic Heroes*, *Sonic Advance 3*, *Shadow The Hedgehog*, *Sonic Rush*, *Sonic Riders*, *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity*, *Sonic The Hedgehog* (2006), *Sonic Rivals*, *Sonic and the Secret Rings*, *Sonic Rivals 2*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™*, *SEGA Superstars Tennis*, *Sonic Chronicles*, *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* (cameo), *Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing*, *Sonic and the Black Knight*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™*, *Sonic Free Riders*, *Sonic Colors* (DS), *Sonic Generations*, *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™*, *Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed*  
**Specialty:** Climbing walls and gliding through the air



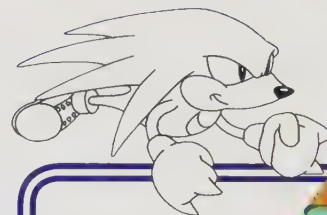


*Sonic The Hedgehog 3* (Genesis, 1994)

The protector of the Master Emerald, Knuckles is a young and naive echidna who was fooled by Dr. Eggman and accused Sonic of stealing the Chaos Emeralds. Make no mistake: Knuckles is a good guy through and through, but he is easily fooled, especially by those with villainous intentions. Before long, though, he would become Sonic and Tails' closest and most reliable friend. Knuckles is incredibly strong, and can both climb walls and glide through the air to get where he needs to go.

Designed by Takashi Thomas Yuda, Knuckles has pride and confidence to spare, believing in himself to the end despite his gullible nature. He is a likable companion, always ready to help his friends – especially if their mission involves protecting or recovering the Master Emerald, which he protects fiercely. His unwavering sense of duty in this regard unfortunately leads to him spending most of his days as a loner.

The echidna has found something of a new rival in Rouge the Bat, with whom he has competed in the past to gather the pieces of the shattered Master Emerald. But is it just a rivalry? At times, it has seemed as if Knuckles might actually be falling for her. Despite his strong personality and relative arrogance, Knuckles still sometimes gets jealous of Sonic, who always seems to be in the spotlight and is loved by everyone. ■



## Trivia

- At the beginning of *Sonic 3*'s development, Knuckles was supposed to be green, but he would later become red. This was to show the difference between him and Sonic in terms of speed and intelligence versus power and strength.



# CHARACTERS



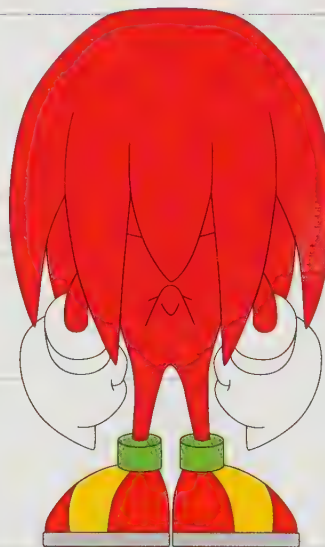
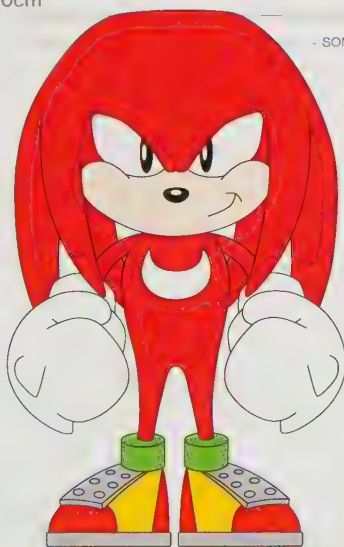
1994 — Sonic The Hedgehog 3

1994 — Sonic & Knuckles

1994 — Sonic Triple Trouble

110cm

- SONIC size



M:90/Y:70	M:10/Y:20	M:20/Y:100	M:80/Y:90	C:70/Y:90	K:30	W:100
					K:100	





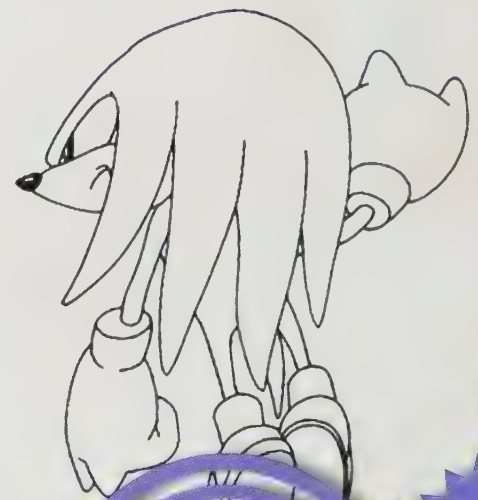
1995 — Knuckles' Chaotix



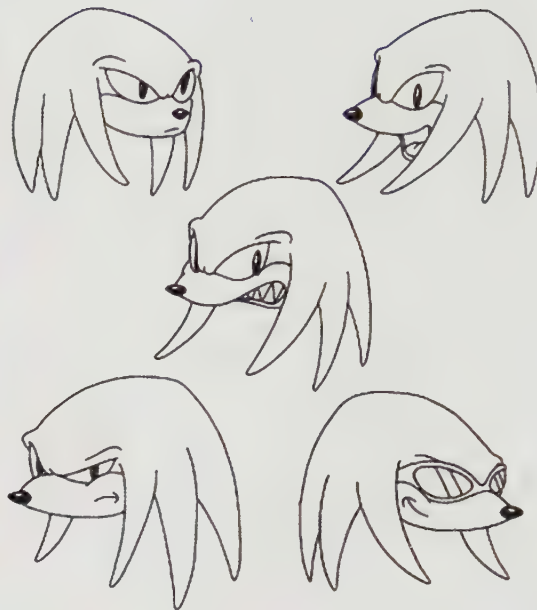
1996 — Sonic The Fighters



1997 — Sonic R



# CHARACTER







2006 — Sonic Riders



2008 — Sonic Chronicles



2009 — Sonic and the Black Knight



2010 — Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing



# CHARACTERS

## DR. EGGMAN

ドクター・エッグマン



**Also known as:** ドクター・エッグマン [*Dokuta Eggman*], Doctor Ivo Robotnik

**Species:** Human

**Gender:** Male

**Weight:** 300 lbs.

**Height:** 6 feet, 2 inches

**Status:** Sonic's sworn enemy

**First appearance:**

*Sonic The Hedgehog* (Genesis, 1991)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic The Hedgehog* (GG), *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* (Gen. & GG), *Sonic CD*, *SEGA Sonic The Hedgehog*, *Sonic The Hedgehog 3*, *Sonic & Knuckles*, *Sonic Chaos*, *Sonic Triple Trouble*, *Sonic The Fighters*, *Sonic Blast*, *Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine*, *Knuckles' Chaotix*, *Sonic The Hedgehog Pocket Adventure*, *Sonic Adventure*, *Sonic Adventure 2*, *Sonic Heroes*, *Sonic Rivals*, *Sonic Rivals 2*, *Sonic Advance*, *Sonic Advance 2*, *Sonic Advance 3*, *Shadow The Hedgehog*, *Sonic The Hedgehog* (2006), *Sonic and the Secret Rings*, *Sonic Rush*, *Sonic Chronicles*, *Sonic Unleashed*, *Sonic Rush Adventure*, *Sonic Spinball*, *Sonic Labyrinth*, *Sonic 3D Blast*, *Sonic Drift*, *Sonic Drift 2*, *Sonic R*, *Sonic Shuffle*, *Sonic Pinball Party*, *Sonic Riders*, *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity*, *Sonic Battle*, *SEGA Superstars Tennis*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™*, *Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing*, *Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode I*, *Sonic Colors*, *Sonic Free Riders*, *Sonic Generations*, *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™*, *Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode II*, *Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode Metal*, *Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed*

**Specialty:** Has an outstanding IQ of 300





*Sonic The Hedgehog (Genesis, 1991)*

Designed by Naoto Ôshima, this mustachioed scientist with an IQ of 300 is a madman whose ultimate goal is to rule the world. His strength lies in his intelligence and ability to create anything he needs to achieve his dream. He does not hesitate to exploit the vulnerability of people weaker than he, and he remains – despite his legendary clumsiness – a wicked villain. But Sonic has always stood in his way... and won!

This egg-shaped mad scientist is the grandson of Professor Gerald Robotnik, and he might have become SEGA's mascot. Indeed, he was among the sketches kept by SEGA's executives when the company was looking for a rival to combat Mario.

Even though his physical appearance has changed over the years, his personality has remained consistent, and is akin to that of a spoiled child who throws a tantrum unless he gets what he wants. He has been Sonic's sworn enemy ever since the beginning, and that is not likely to change anytime soon... if ever.

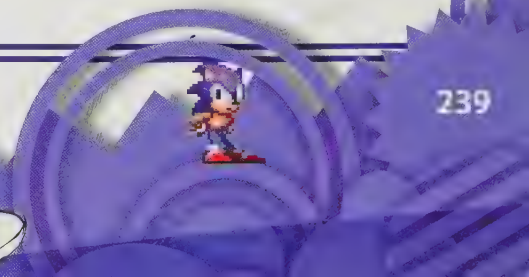
While Dr. Eggman seems to love being a villain, his conscience played tricks on him in one rare scenario where he ended up helping Sonic and his friends reach the Space Colony ARK in *Sonic Adventure 2*. Most of the time, however, he prefers to be alone with his inventions, plotting out his next diabolical scheme for world domination.

It is often Eggman who provides comic relief in the various Sonic animation productions. In *Sonic The Hedgehog: The Movie* (1996), many sequences depict him as a clown-like character, showing his human side despite his evil plans. ■



## Trivia

- He was first called Robotnik in the West and took the name Eggman from *Sonic Adventure* onward. This character was among the sketches kept during the creation of SEGA's mascot at the beginning of the 1990s. Although he might have taken the hedgehog's spotlight, he eventually became his enemy.



# CHARACTERS



1991 — Sonic The Hedgehog

1992 — Sonic The Hedgehog 2 (Death Egg Robot)

1994 — Sonic The Hedgehog 3

185cm



c:10/M:90/Y:60
  Y:100
  M:20/Y:30
  M:70/Y:30
  C:100/M:40
  c:10/M:70/Y:50/K:30
  W:100
  K:100

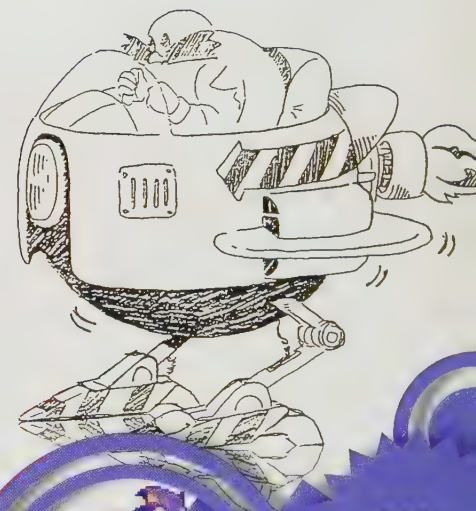




1994 — Sonic Drift



2001 — Sonic Adventure 2



# CHARACTERS



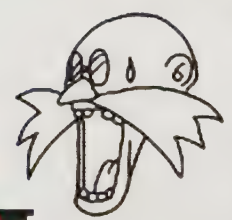
2003 — Sonic Heroes



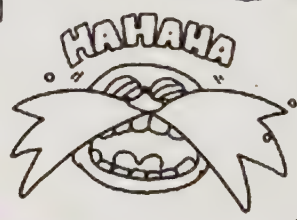
2005 — Shadow The Hedgehog



2005 — Sonic Rush (Eggman Nega)



Dr. EGGMAN







2006 — Sonic The Hedgehog



2006 — Sonic Riders



2010 — Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™



2011— Sonic Generations



2010 — Sonic & SEGA  
All-Stars Racing



## AMY ROSE

エミー・ローズ



**Also known as:**

エミー・ローズ [Emi Rozu], Rosy the Rascal

**Species:** Hedgehog

**Gender:** Female

**Weight:** Secret

**Height:** 2 feet, 11 inches

**Status:** Sonic's friend

**First appearance:** *Sonic CD* (SEGA CD, 1993)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic Drift*, *Sonic Drift 2*, *Sonic The Fighters*, *Sonic R*, *Sonic Adventure*, *Sonic Shuffle*, *Sonic Advance*, *Sonic Adventure 2*, *Sonic Advance 2*, *Sonic Pinball Party*, *Sonic Advance 3*, *Sonic Heroes*, *Shadow The Hedgehog*, *Sonic Rush*, *Sonic Battle*, *Sonic Riders*, *Sonic The Hedgehog (2006)*, *Sonic Rivals*, *Sonic and the Secret Rings*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™*, *Sonic Rivals 2* (collectible card), *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* (sticker, trophy), *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity*, *SEGA Superstars Tennis*, *Sonic Unleashed*, *Sonic Chronicles*, *Sonic and the Black Knight*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™*, *Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing*, *Sonic Colors* (DS), *Sonic Free Riders*, *Sonic Generations*, *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™*, *Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed*

**Specialty:** Wielding her Piko Piko Hammer

Madly in love with Sonic, Amy follows him everywhere and often ends up being kidnapped or imprisoned by Eggman and his minions as a result. Jealous and possessive, this female hedgehog is stubborn but also extremely generous, always ready to help out those in need. She only has one aim: to marry Sonic.

Don't be fooled by her cute, sweet appearance; Amy wields her Piko Piko Hammer to dangerous effect, and won't think twice about using it to defend herself. She appeared for the first time in *Sonic CD* (1993), where she was abducted by Metal Sonic, and it wasn't until *Sonic Drift* on the Game Gear (released only in Japan) that she would first become a playable character. Amy is sweet and lovable, and she'll make Sonic see that too, if it's the last thing she does... ■



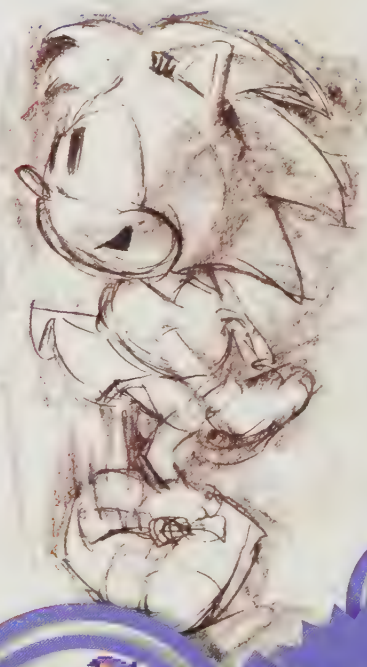


Sonic CD (SEGA CD, 1993)



## Trivia

- Amy was the first female character to be a part of Sonic's world. She first appeared in American comics under the name of Rosy the Rascal.
- Amy has her own game, *Amy's American Page One*, which is a card game playable only on mobile phones in Japan.



# CHARACTERS



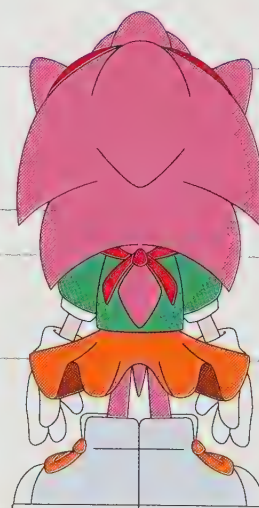
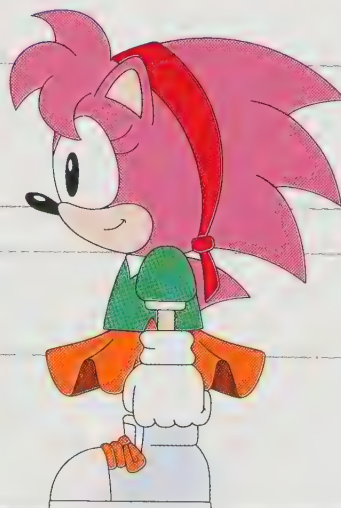
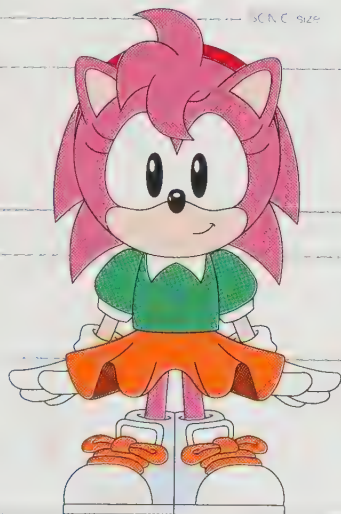
1993 — Sonic CD

1996 — Sonic The Fighters

1998 — Sonic Adventure

100cm

90cm



M:60/Y:10   
  M:20/Y:20   
  C:10/M:90/Y:60   
  C:70/M:10/Y:70   
  C:20/M:10   
  M:60/Y:100   
  M:60/Y:100/K:50   
  W:100   
  K:100





2003 — Sonic Advance 2



2006 — Sonic Riders



2007 — Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™

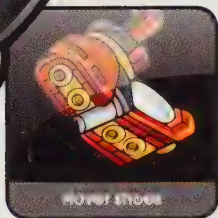


2011 — Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™



## SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG

シャドウ・ザ・ヘッジホッグ



**Also known as:** シャドウ・ザ・ヘッジホッグ [Shado za Hejjihoggu], Ultimate Life Form

**Species:** Hedgehog

**Gender:** Male

**Weight:** 77 lbs.

**Height:** 3 feet, 4 inches

**Status:** Anti-hero, Sonic's rival and friend

**First appearance:** *Sonic Adventure 2* (Dreamcast, 2001)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic Heroes*, *Sonic Battle*, *Shadow The Hedgehog*, *Sonic Rivals*, *Sonic Rivals 2*, *Sonic Riders*, *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity*, *Sonic The Hedgehog (2006)*, *Sonic and the Secret Rings*, *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* (cameo, trophy), *Sonic Chronicles*, *Sonic Unleashed* (mentioned), *Sonic and the Black Knight* (Lancelot), *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™*, *SEGA Superstars Tennis*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™*, *Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing*, *Sonic Free Riders*, *Sonic Colors* (DS), *Sonic Generations*, *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™*, *Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed*

**Specialty:** Skating at supersonic speed with his hover shoes

This black hedgehog was created as Sonic's fiercest rival. He's equal to the blue blur in terms of speed and ability, but he also has skills like teleportation and the ability to stop time. Shadow, who is able to control the energy of the Chaos Emeralds, hides a dark and tragic past. He is the Ultimate Life Form created by Doctor Eggman's grandfather, Gerald Robotnik. He serves just causes, even though his conscience is not evenly balanced. A loner, Shadow talks very little but always takes action. When he becomes set on an idea or objective, no one can convince him to stray from his path – and those who try often quickly regret it. Even though he is a friend of Sonic's (to a certain extent), he is torn by the desire to surpass the blue hedgehog. His sad past, linked to Maria Robotnik's, is a weakness that Dr. Eggman exploits without hesitation.

Shadow was at first scheduled to make only one appearance – in *Sonic Adventure 2* – but he later became a recurring character in the Sonic universe thanks to his strong popularity among players. In fact, he even got his 15 minutes of fame in his own 3D platform game named after him: *Shadow The Hedgehog*. ■





*Sonic Adventure 2 (Dreamcast, 2001)*



## Trivia

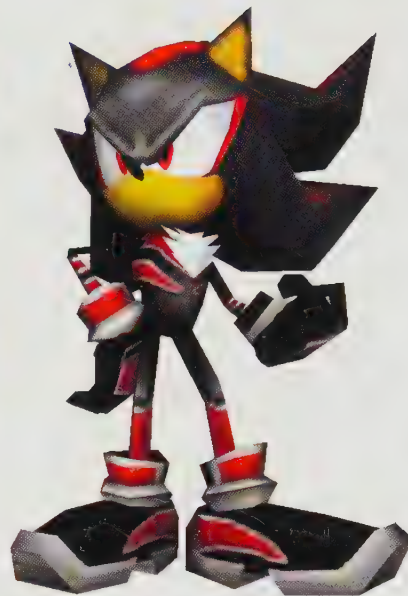
- At the beginning of development on *Sonic Adventure 2*, Shadow was called "Terios", which means "reflection of", since he is Sonic's doppelgänger.
- Quite popular, Shadow was ranked 25th in the "Top 50 Best Video Game Heroes of All Time" poll published in the 2011 Guinness World Records Gamer's Edition.
- Shadow played the role of Sir Lancelot, the second boss in *Sonic and the Black Knight*. He became playable once he was defeated.



# CHARACTERS



2005 — Shadow The Hedgehog



2006 — Sonic Rivals



2003 — Sonic Battle



2001 — Sonic Adventure 2





2009 — Sonic and the Black Knight

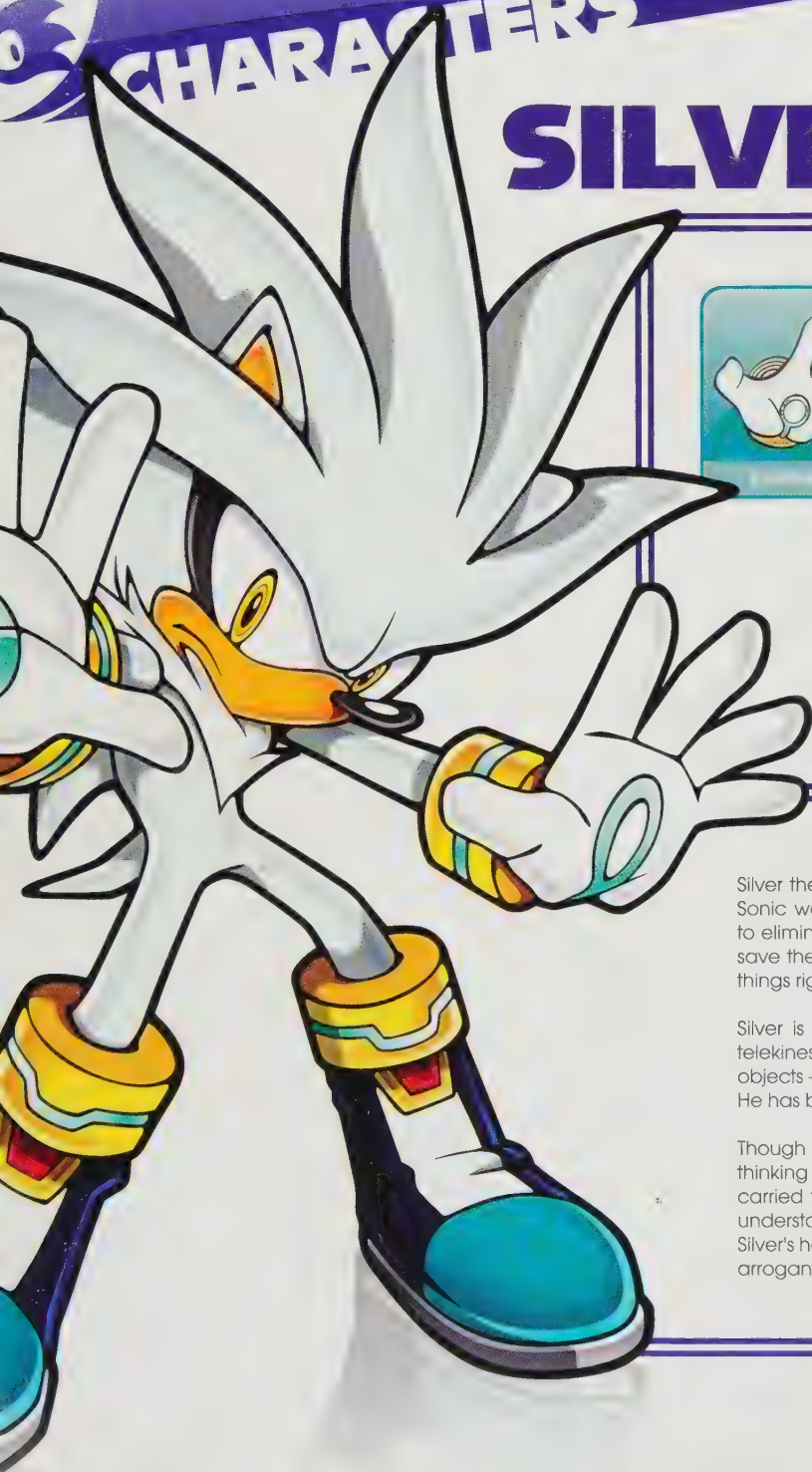


2011 — Sonic Generations



## SILVER THE HEDGEHOG

シルバー・ザ・ヘッジホッグ



**Also known as:**

シルバー・ザ・ヘッジホッグ [Shiruba za Hejjihoggu]

**Species:** Hedgehog

**Gender:** Male

**Weight:** 77 lbs.

**Height:** 3 feet, 4 inches

**Status:** Sonic's friend

**First appearance:**

*Sonic The Hedgehog* (2006) (Xbox 360/PS3, 2006)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic Rivals*, *Sonic Rivals 2*, *Sonic and the Secret Rings*, *SEGA Superstars Tennis* (cameo), *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* (trophy, cameo), *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity*, *Sonic and the Black Knight*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™*, *Sonic Free Riders*, *Sonic Colors* (DS), *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™*, *Sonic Generations*

**Specialty:** Psychokinesis; hurls objects at his enemies and levitates using his mind

Silver the Hedgehog is a time traveler from the future. Early on, he believed Sonic was the cause of a cataclysmic event and he traveled through time to eliminate him. But during his journey, he found out that Sonic was trying to save the world, just like him, and he decided to help Sonic and Shadow set things right.

Silver is quite different from the other two hedgehogs, being a master of telekinesis and telepathy. Using just the strength of his mind, he can levitate objects – even huge ones – as well as levitate himself and fire blasts of energy. He has been compared to Trunks in the series *Dragon Ball Z*.

Though Silver has a strong sense of justice, he often rushes into battle without thinking and comes off as somewhat immature. He once believed that he carried the weight of the world on his shoulders alone, but finally came to understand that he needed his companions' help to achieve his objective. Silver's heart is absolutely in the right place, although he comes off as strangely arrogant in *Sonic Rivals* and *Sonic Rivals 2* for the PSP. ■





*Sonic The Hedgehog (2006) (X360/PS3, 2006)*



## Trivia

- At first, Silver was supposed to be an orange mink named Venice, as a reference to the Italian city.
- Silver's Japanese voice actor, Daisuke Ono, is also known for playing the character of Itsuki Koizumi in the anime series *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya*

## BLAZE THE CAT

ブレイズ・ザ・キャット

**Also known as:** ブレイズ・ザ・キャット [*Bureizu za Kyatto*], Princess Blaze

**Species:** Cat

**Gender:** Female

**Weight:** Unknown

**Height:** 3 feet, 2 inches

**Status:** Sonic's friend, Cream's close friend

**First appearance:** *Sonic Rush* (Nintendo DS, 2005)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic The Hedgehog* (2006), *Sonic Rivals* (collectible card), *Sonic and the Secret Rings*, *Sonic Rush Adventure*, *Sonic Rivals 2* (collectible card), *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™*, *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity*, *Sonic and the Black Knight* (Percival), *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™*, *SEGA Superstars Tennis*, *Sonic Free Riders*, *Sonic Colors* (DS), *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™*, *Sonic Generations*

**Specialty:** Pyrokinesis; attacks enemies with fire and cloaks herself in flame



Just like Knuckles with the Master Emerald, Blaze is the guardian of the Sol Emeralds. She is a princess from a parallel dimension who wields the power of fire, though she considers it a curse. She is not fully aware of the Sol Emeralds' awe-inspiring power, but she does know that they are of crucial importance. Calm and mysterious, she made her first appearance in *Sonic Rush* after Dr. Eggman stole the Sol Emeralds.

Fighting alongside Sonic, Blaze has a close friendship with Cream the Rabbit; together they form an inseparable duo. She also made an appearance in the game *Sonic and the Black Knight* as Percival, one of the Knights of the Round Table and the game's third boss. Upon her defeat, she became a playable character. ■





*Sonic Rush* (Nintendo DS, 2005)



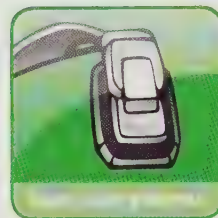
## Trivia

- Blaze is one of the few female characters in the series. She is also the only one who can harness the energy of the Sol Emeralds, and doing this allows her to transform into Burning Blaze, her Super form.



## VECTOR THE CROCODILE

ベクター・ザ・クロコダイル



**Also known as:**

ベクター・ザ・クロコダイル [Bekuta za Kurokodairu]

**Species:** Crocodile

**Gender:** Male

**Weight:** 440 lbs.

**Height:** 5 feet, 11 inches

**Status:** Chaotix leader, Espio and Charmy's friend

**First appearance:** *Knuckles' Chaotix* (32X, 1995)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic Heroes*, *Shadow The Hedgehog*, *Sonic Gems Collection*, *Sonic Rivals* (collectible card), *Sonic Rivals 2* (collectible card), *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™*, *Sonic Chronicles* (cameo), *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* (sticker), *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™*, *Sonic Free Riders*, *Sonic Colors* (DS), *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™*, *Sonic Generations*

**Defining characteristic:** His super loud Walkman

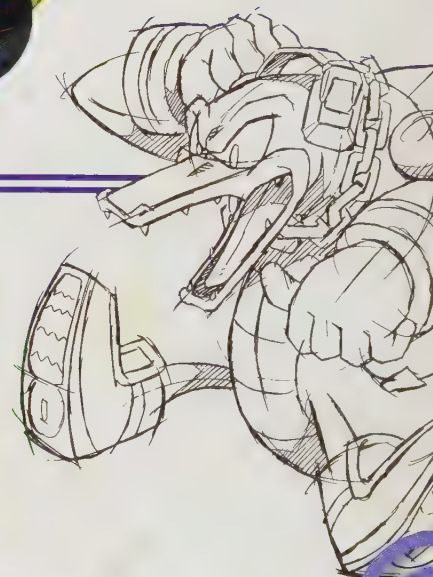
Vector is the leader of the Chaotix detective team and a music lover who is never seen without his headphones. He'll accept almost any job if the pay is right, though he won't get involved in anything illegal. He's a bit of a lout, but beneath his gruff, crude exterior lies a heart of pure gold. Although he can be quite clumsy, he can roll into a ball to attack enemies and is extremely tough. His hotheadedness sometimes lands him in hot water, which forces his partners to come to his rescue.

Vector is not to be trifled with; he has been known to body slam, bite, and breathe fire at his enemies and, shockingly, can use bubble gum as both a tool and a weapon. His appearance has changed many times over the years, most notably in *Sonic Heroes* (2004), but one thing remains consistent: he always keeps his trusty Walkman at his side. ■





Knuckles' Chaotix (32X, 1995)



## Trivia

- Vector is the oldest of the Chaotix members.
- He was included in the original *Sonic The Hedgehog*'s scrapped scenario. In it, he was a member of the same band Sonic was in, showing that he has always been musically inclined.
- Vector was also, along with Espio, the series' first reptilian character.



## CREAM THE RABBIT

クリーム・ザ・ラビット



**Also known as:** クリーム・ザ・ラビット [*Kurimu za Rabitto*]

**Species:** Rabbit

**Gender:** Female

**Weight:** 26 lbs.

**Height:** 3 feet, 4 inches

**Status:** Sonic's friend, Blaze's close friend

**First appearance:** *Sonic Mega Collection* (2002)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic Advance 2*, *Sonic Adventure DX* (cameo), *Sonic Heroes*, *Shadow the Hedgehog*, *Sonic Battle*, *Sonic Advance 3*, *Sonic Rush*, *Sonic Pinball Party*, *Sonic Riders*, *Sonic Rivals*, *Sonic Rivals 2*, *Sonic and the Secret Rings*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™*, *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity*, *Sonic Chronicles*, *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* (trophy, sticker), *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™*, *Sonic Colors* (DS), *Sonic Free Riders*, *Sonic Generations*, *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™*

**Defining characteristic:** Her Chao, Cheese

An ice cream lover, Cream is an adorable rabbit who is rarely, if ever, seen without her beloved Chao named Cheese. She can use her long ears to fly for a brief time, and defends herself by launching Cheese at those who would do her harm. Cheese is surprisingly effective and resilient despite his cute appearance. A sweet, good-natured heroine, Cream is caring and often clumsy. She appeared for the first time in the "artwork" section of *Sonic Mega Collection*, and *Sonic Advance 2* marked her debut as a playable character. She is also the only Sonic character to have made her debut on a Nintendo console.

Just as Shadow and Silver were designed to be hedgehog counterparts to Sonic, Cream was originally meant to be a female fox – that is to say, Tails' counterpart. She was then redesigned into a squirrel, before finally becoming the rabbit she is today. Most likely because she is young and bold, she is the only female character in the series who doesn't hide her weight. ■





*Sonic Advance 2 (Game Boy Advance, 2002)*



## Trivia

- Cream's name is actually a reference to ice cream, as her mother's name is Vanilla.



## ROUGE THE BAT

ルージュ・ザ・バット



**Also known as:** ルージュ・ザ・バット [*Ruju za Batto*], Bat Girl

**Species:** Bat

**Gender:** Female

**Weight:** Unknown

**Height:** 3 feet, 6 inches

**Status:** Knuckles' friend

**First appearance:**

*Sonic Adventure 2* (Dreamcast, 2001)

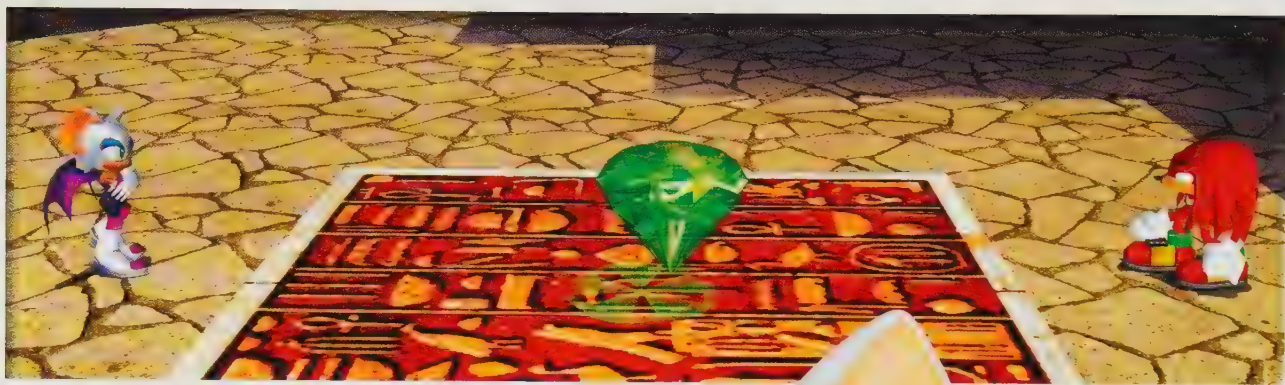
**Other appearances:** *Sonic Heroes*, *Sonic Battle*, *Shadow The Hedgehog*, *Sonic Riders*, *Sonic The Hedgehog (2006)*, *Sonic Rivals*, *Sonic Rivals 2*, *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity*, *Sonic Chronicles*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™*, *Sonic Free Riders*, *Sonic Colors (DS)*, *Sonic Generations*, *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™*

**Specialty:** Hunting for treasure

This young, sultry bat is a talented treasure hunter. Always looking for the next shiny jewel, she is rather bold about her desires and this often puts her in sticky situations. She's a calculating individual who uses her charms to get what she wants. Though she usually puts her own interests first, she'll drop all pretenses and fight for the greater good when push comes to shove. She has worked and fought alongside Sonic many times.

She once investigated Shadow as a government spy, a job she relished as an opportunity to search for Chaos Emeralds. She first crossed paths with Knuckles when the red echidna was trying to recover the pieces of the shattered Master Emerald. Initially the two were adversaries who competed to recover the pieces, but they begrudgingly developed respect for one another and became friends. Some of Rouge's behavior around the echidna, however, suggests that her feelings go beyond just friendship... ■





Sonic Adventure 2 (Dreamcast, 2001)



## Trivia

- At first, Rouge's name was to be "Nails". Her current name is a reference to the city of Baton Rouge in Louisiana, as well as her love of jewels.
- Rouge's voice was done by Lani Minella, who also voiced Pit and Lucas in *Super Smash Bros. Brawl*.



## CHAO

チャオ

**Also known as:** チャオ [Chow]

**Species:** Chao

**Gender:** -

**Weight:** 15 lbs.

**Height:** 6 inches

**Status:** Neutral

**First appearance:** *Sonic Adventure* (Dreamcast, 1998)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic Adventure 2*, *Sonic Mega Collection* (cameo), *Sonic Pinball Party*, *Sonic Shuffle*, *Sonic Heroes*, *Shadow The Hedgehog*, *Sonic The Hedgehog (2006)*, *Sonic Advance*, *Sonic Advance 2*, *Sonic Advance 3*, *SEGA Superstars*, *Sonic Chronicles*, *Sonic Rivals* (collectible card), *Sonic Rivals 2*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™*, *SEGA Superstars Tennis* (cameo), *Sonic Chronicles*, *Samba de Amigo Wii* (cameo), *Sonic Unleashed*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™*, *Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing* (cameo), *Sonic Colors* (DS), *Sonic Generations*, *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™*

**Defining characteristic:** Ability to evolve into various forms

These adorable little creatures made their first appearance in 1998 with the release of *Sonic Adventure*, but can now be found in many different Sonic titles. First created by SEGA as an optional diversion for players who might want to take a break from *Adventure*'s main quest every now and then, Chao have unique personalities and emotions. They can learn many different abilities depending on the kind of animals they are given, and can evolve into one of three forms – Neutral, Hero, or Dark – depending on how they are raised. As a bit of trivia, Chao are asexual. Their role in the series has faded as of late, which has caused many players to beg the people in charge at SEGA to bring back the famous Chao Gardens in the Sonic series' next games. ■





*Sonic Adventure (Dreamcast, 1998)*



Omochao



## Trivia

- You don't necessarily need a game from the *Sonic Adventure* series to transfer a Chao from your GameCube to your Game Boy Advance.



## CHAOS

カオス



**Also known as:** カオス [Kaosu], God of Destruction, Guardian God of the Chao

**Species:** Chao (mutated)

**Gender:** Unknown

**Weight:** Unknown

**Height:** Unknown

**Status:** Neutral

**First appearance:** *Sonic Adventure* (Dreamcast, 1998)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic Adventure 2*, *Sonic Heroes* (mentioned), *Sonic Battle*, *Sonic Rivals* (collectible card), *Sonic Rivals 2* (collectible card), *Sonic Chronicles* (mentioned), *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™*, *Sonic Generations*

**Defining characteristic:** Ability to transform via Chaos Emerald absorption

This mysterious liquid life form, once sealed inside the Master Emerald, was freed by Dr. Eggman to help him achieve his diabolical plans for world domination. Chaos became bigger and more powerful each time the mad doctor gave it a Chaos Emerald. Originally, Chaos was the guardian god of the Chao, but prolonged exposure to the Master Emerald's energy mutated it into a strange creature capable of surprising transformations. Upon absorbing all seven Chaos Emeralds, he became the nearly-immortal Perfect Chaos. It appeared in *Sonic Adventure* for the first time. The character of Chaos actually originated in one possible storyline for the canceled game *Sonic X-Treme*, in which he was known as "ChaosDoom". ■





Sonic Adventure (Dreamcast, 1998)



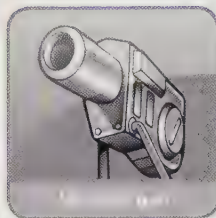
## Trivia

- In Greek mythology, Chaos is the essential element of the Hesiodic theogony. It is the universe's initial state, existing before both the world and the gods.



## E-102 GAMMA

ガンマ



**Also known as:** ガンマ [Gamma], E-102

**Species:** Robot

**Gender:** -

**Weight:** 1,818 lbs.

**Height:** 7 feet

**Status:** Neutral

**First appearance:** *Sonic Adventure* (Dreamcast, 1998)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic Shuffle*, *Sonic Heroes* (mentioned), *Sonic Battle* (as Chaos Gamma), *Sonic Rivals* (collectible card), *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* (sticker)

**Specialty:** Dispatching enemies with his machine gun

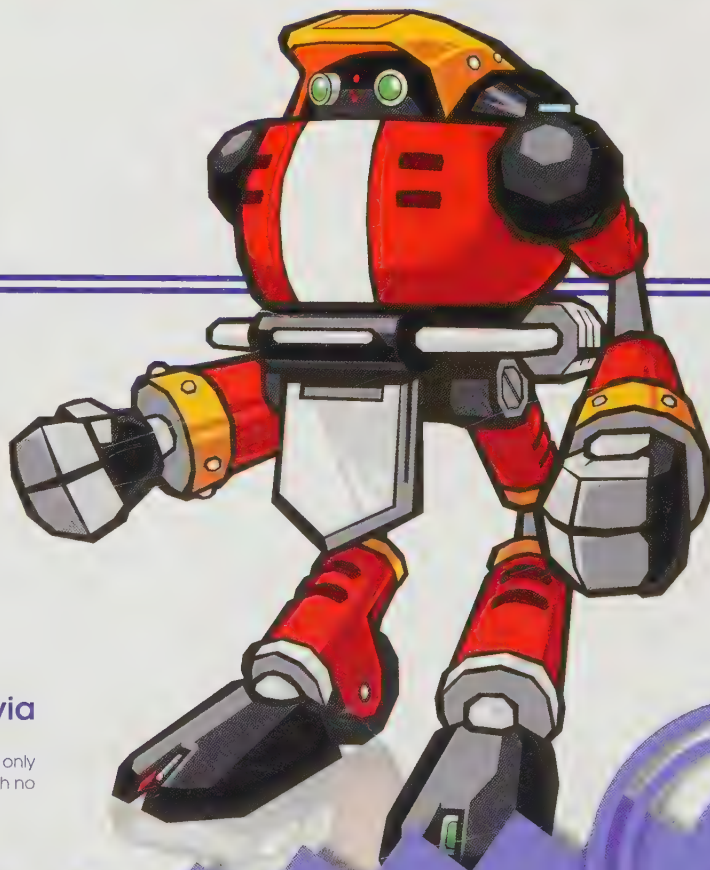
E-102 Gamma appeared for the first time in *Sonic Adventure*. Designed by the dreadful Dr. Eggman, Gamma was a gunner robot from the E-100 series who received electricity from a pink Flicky trapped within its body. The android was programmed to collect Chaos Emeralds and, soon after its creation at Eggman's Mystic Ruins base, was tested to see if it was worthy of joining an elite robot unit aboard the Egg Carrier. During the journey, Gamma came to understand that it was misguided, and the player witnessed its redemption. It betrayed Eggman and decided to assist Sonic and his friends by saving the animals trapped within the rest of the E-100 series. Sadly, while Gamma would succeed in its mission, it would not return from it.

Gamma provided a completely new kind of gameplay in *Sonic Adventure* with its signature machine gun and unique ways of moving (including the ability to hover). The development team created Gamma because many fans had asked to see some shooting sequences added to the series. The development team could not give Sonic a gun, of course, so their solution was to introduce a new, gun-wielding character. ■





Sonic Adventure (Dreamcast, 1998)



## Trivia

- In *Sonic Adventure*, Gamma was the only playable character to have a theme song with no lyrics.



## CHARMY BEE

チャーミー・ビー



**Also known as:** チャーミー・ビー [Chamy Bi]

**Species:** Bee

**Gender:** Male

**Weight:** 22 lbs.

**Height:** 3 feet, 4 inches

**Status:** Chaotix member, Vector and Espio's friend

**First appearance:** *Knuckles' Chaotix* (32X, 1995)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic Heroes*, *Shadow The Hedgehog*, *Sonic Rivals* (collectible card), *Sonic Rivals 2* (collectible card), *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™* (cameo), *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™* (cameo), *Sonic Colors* (DS), *Sonic Generations*, *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™*

**Specialty:** Attacking enemies with his stinger

This young bee is the Chaotix team's youngest member. Even though he's quite small, Charmy is courageous and surprisingly strong, capable of carrying Espio and even Vector. Unfortunately, this doesn't prevent him from being captured by the evil Dr. Eggman on occasion, and Charmy can be too child-like for his own good at times. This hyperactive bee appeared for the first time in a Japanese Sonic manga in 1995 before coming to life on-screen in *Knuckles' Chaotix*. Following that title, Charmy would be absent from the series until his triumphant return in *Sonic Heroes* (2003)! ■





*Knuckles' Chaotix (32X, 1995)*



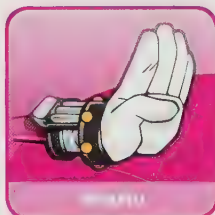
## Trivia

- Charmy Bee has spent most of his Sonic career as a secondary character. It was only in 2003, with the release of *Sonic Heroes*, that the bee became a playable character again.
- Charmy's age and height have changed many times throughout the series, with the former being listed as anywhere between 6 and 16.



# ESPIO THE CHAMELEON

エスピオ・ザ・カメレオン



**Also known as:**

エスピオ・ザ・カメレオン [*Espio za Kamereon*]

**Species:** Chameleon

**Gender:** Male

**Weight:** 80 lbs.

**Height:** 3 feet, 8 inches

**Status:** Chaotix member, Vector and Charmy's friend

**First appearance:** *Knuckles' Chaotix* (32X, 1995)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic The Fighters*, *Sonic Heroes*, *Shadow The Hedgehog*, *Sonic Rivals* (collectible card), *Sonic Rivals 2*, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™* (cameo), *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™* (cameo), *Sonic Colors* (DS), *Sonic Generations*, *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™* (cameo)

**Specialty:** Ninjutsu; can disappear by blending into the background and is incredibly quick

Though he is an expert in ninjutsu, Espio was once nearly captured by Dr. Eggman and Metal Sonic. He owed his freedom to Knuckles, so he decided to team up with the echidna to put an end to the mad scientist's evil plans. Curiously, the Japanese manual for *Knuckles' Chaotix* stated that Espio was a detective investigating a mysterious island, yet according to the manual for the American version, he was simply visiting "Carnival Island". Taciturn and mysterious, Espio made his debut in *Knuckles' Chaotix* before throwing down with his friends in *Sonic The Fighters*. His design was updated by Sonic Team's Nobuhiko Honda in 2003. ■





*Knuckles' Chaotix (32X, 1995)*



## Trivia

- Espio got his name from the word "espionage". He is an accomplished ninja, both fast and able to blend into the background in an instant.
- Today, Espio wears different shoes than the ones he had in *Knuckles' Chaotix* and *Sonic The Fighters*.



## BIG THE CAT

ビッグ・ザ・キャット



**Also known as:** ビッグ・ザ・キャット [Biggu za Kyatto], Mr. Big

**Species:** Cat

**Gender:** Male

**Weight:** 616 lbs.

**Height:** 6 feet, 8 inches

**Status:** Secondary character

**First appearance:** *Sonic Adventure* (Dreamcast, 1998)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic Adventure 2* (cameo), *Sonic Shuffle*, *Sonic Battle* (cameo), *Sonic Heroes*, *Sonic and the Secret Rings* (cameo), *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games™* (cameo), *Sonic Chronicles*, *SEGA Superstars Tennis* (cameo), *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* (cameo), *Sonic and the Black Knight* (mentioned as an item), *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™* (cameo), *Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing*, *Sonic Colors* (DS), *Sonic Generations* (cameo)

**Specialty:** Fishing

A passionate fisherman, this huge purple feline – who is reminiscent of the Hayao Miyazaki character Totoro – lives in the heart of the jungle with his best friend, Froggy the frog. He is a quiet, soft individual, who leisurely spends his days fishing and lounging in his wooden shed. Designed by Yuji Uekawa, Takashi Iizuka, and Naoto Ōshima, Big made his first appearance in *Sonic Adventure* and would be playable again in 2003 with the release of *Sonic Heroes*. Weighing in at 616 pounds and standing at six feet, eight inches tall, he is the heaviest non-robot character in the series. He is a perfect fit for the strong-man role on Team Rose. ■





Sonic Adventure (Dreamcast, 1998)



## Trivia

- Fishing is very popular among Japanese people. Big was created rather late into *Sonic Adventure*'s development to include this popular pastime in the game.
- Big's American voice actor is the charismatic Jon St. John, who is also the voice of Duke Nukem.



## JET THE HAWK

ジェット・ザ・ホーク



**Also known as:** ジェット・ザ・ホーク [Jetto za Hoku].

Legendary Wind Master, Legendary Wind Rider

**Species:** Hawk

**Gender:** Male

**Weight:** 73 lbs.

**Height:** 3 feet, 4 inches

**Status:** Babylon Rogues leader

**First appearance:**

*Sonic Riders* (PS2/Xbox/GameCube, 2006)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity*, *Sonic Rivals* (cameo), *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™*, *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* (trophy), *Sonic and the Black Knight* (Sir Lamorak), *Sonic Free Riders*, *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™*

**Specialty:** Speed; races circles around opponents on his Extreme Gear

As a master of Extreme Gear, a famous type of hover board, Jet is always hungry for victory and obsessed with winning. This 14-year-old leader of the Babylon Rogues was Sonic's main rival in *Sonic Riders*. Hailing from an intelligent and creative tribe of hawks, he is supremely arrogant and does not hesitate to let his teammates handle any and all of the dirty work. In the U.S., Jet was voiced by Jason Griffith – the same actor who voiced Sonic and Shadow – until 2010. ■





*Sonic Riders* (Multiple, 2006)



## Trivia

- Jet is part of a group called the "Babylon Rogues", and he is the only member of this clan to be playable in a game other than *Sonic Riders*. Indeed, he appeared as Sir Lamorak in *Sonic and the Black Knight*.
- Jet's resemblance to Bean the Dynamite from *Sonic The Fighters* is striking.



## WAVE THE SWALLOW

ウェーブ・ザ・スワロー



**Also known as:** ウェーブ・ザ・スワロー [Uebu za Suwaro]

**Species:** Swallow

**Gender:** Female

**Weight:** Between 44 and 55 lbs.

**Height:** 3 feet, 8 inches

**Status:** Babylon Rogues member

**First appearance:**

*Sonic Riders* (PS2/Xbox/GameCube, 2006)

**Other appearances:** *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* (sticker), *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity*, *Sonic Rivals* (cameo), *Sonic and the Secret Rings* (cameo), *Sonic Free Riders*

**Specialty:** Blowing her opponents up with dynamite

This talented bird joined the Sonic series as one of the cast of *Sonic Riders*. In this racing game centered around Extreme Gear hover boards, Wave proved to be a formidable racer, just like her father before her. She is a brilliant mechanic, and her knowledge of Extreme Gear is far superior to Dr. Eggman and Tails, who are both expert mechanics in their own right. ■





Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity (Wii/PS2, 2008)



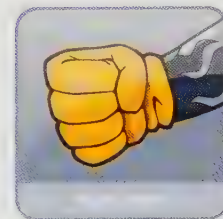
## Trivia

- Even though she is a swallow, she is never seen flying.
- She was voiced, both in English and in Japanese, by the actress who played Sakura in the *Naruto* anime series.



# STORM THE ALBATROSS

ストーム・ザ・アルバトロス



**Also known as:** ストーム・ザ・アルバトロス [*Sutomu za Arubatorosu*]

**Species:** Albatross

**Gender:** Male

**Weight:** 176 lbs.

**Height:** 4 feet, 8 inches

**Status:** Babylon Rogues member

**First appearance:**

*Sonic Riders* (PS2/Xbox/GameCube, 2006)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity*, *Sonic Rivals* (collectible card), *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* (sticker), *Sonic Free Riders*

**Specialty:** Brute force; uses his weight and size to push opponents around

This mighty albatross is a member of the Babylon Rogues and is Knuckles' rival in *Sonic Riders*. Quick to anger, Storm starts stuttering when he gets flustered. Though he is not very intelligent, he is fiercely loyal to Jet and is a talented Extreme Gear user. Thanks to his brawn, he can push other racers around with ease. Storm appeared for the first time in *Sonic Riders*, and finds a surprising new rival in Amy in *Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity*. ■





*Sonic Riders* (PS2/Xbox/GameCube, 2006)



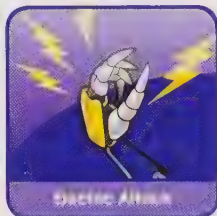
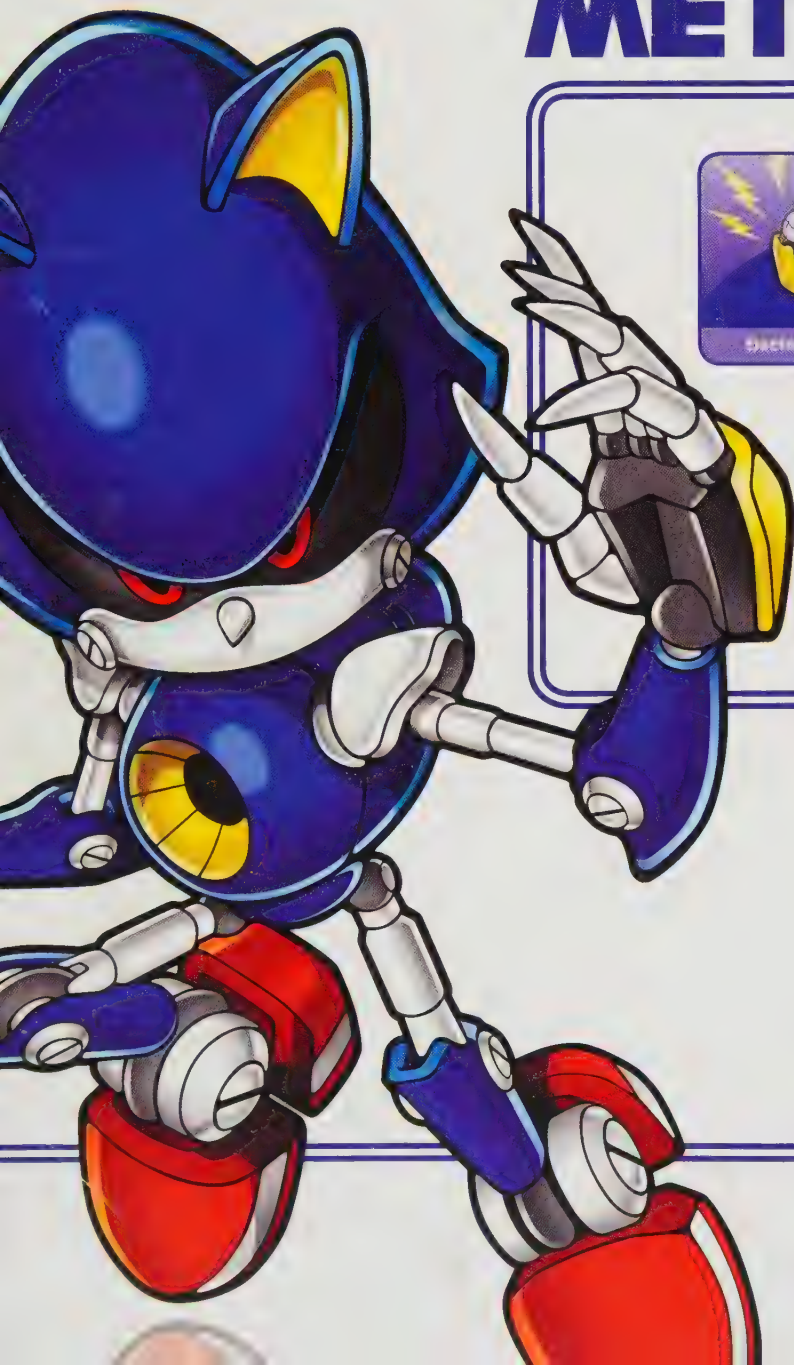
### Trivia

- Even though he is an albatross, Storm does not have wings. He is similar to Big the Cat, with his lack of intelligence and stout build.



## METAL SONIC

メタルソニック



**Also known as:** メタルソニック [Metaru Sonikku]

**Species:** Robot

**Gender:** -

**Weight:** 295 lbs.

**Height:** 3 feet, 4 inches

**Status:** Sonic's enemy/robotic counterpart

**First appearance:** *Sonic CD* (SEGA CD, 1993)

**Other appearances:** *Knuckles' Chaotix*, *Sonic Triple Trouble*, *Sonic Drift 2*, *Sonic R*, *Sonic The Fighters*, *Sonic Adventure*, *Sonic Adventure 2*, *Sonic Pinball Party*, *Sonic Heroes*, *Sonic Battle* (mentioned), *Sonic Rivals*, *Sonic Rivals 2*, *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* (cameo), *SEGA Superstars Tennis* (cameo), *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games™*, *Sonic & SEGA All-Stars Racing*, *Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode I*, *Sonic Free Riders*, *Sonic Generations*, *Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games™*, *Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode II*, *Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode Metal*, *Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed*

**Specialty:** Utilizing his Electric Attack to electrocute Sonic and other enemies

Even more efficient than Mecha Sonic, another Sonic robot built by Dr. Eggman, Metal Sonic is the mad scientist's dearest creation. Able to imitate all of Sonic's characteristics and abilities, it was Eggman's tool for quite some time, until it finally turned its back on him. Metal Sonic is cold, aggressive, and arrogant, and went completely out of control in *Sonic Heroes*, becoming the game's main villain. Created by character designer Kazuyuki Hoshino, a member of Sonic Team, Metal Sonic made its first appearance in 1993's *Sonic CD*. ■



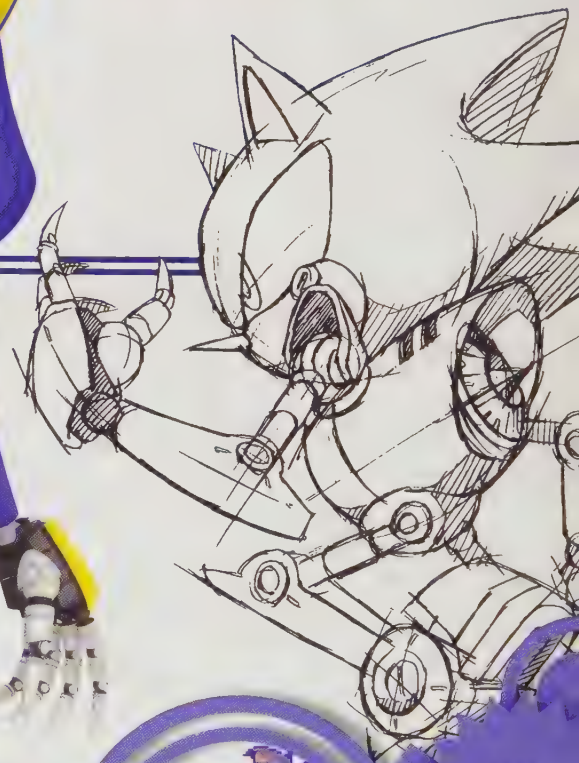


Sonic CD (SEGA CD, 1993)



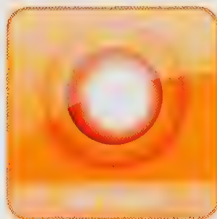
## Trivia

- Depending on which game you're playing, Metal Sonic's personality changes in a few games from being evil in *Sonic Heroes* and brave in *Sonic Rivals 2*. However, as one of Dr. Eggman's greatest creations, Metal Sonic is consistent in his desire to be seen worldwide as superior to Sonic.
- Metal Sonic has several transformations, including Metal Sonic Kai, Neo Metal Sonic, Metal Madness, and Metal Overlord.



## TIKAL

ティカル



**Also known as:** ティカル [Tikaru]

**Gender:** Female

**Weight:** Secret

**Height:** 3 feet, 2 inches

**Species:** Echidna

**Status:** Knuckles' ancestor

**First appearance:** *Sonic Adventure* (Dreamcast, 1998)

**Other appearances:** *Sonic Adventure 2*, *Sonic Adventure 2 Battle*, *Sonic Adventure DX*, *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* (sticker), *Sonic Pinball Party* (cameo), *Sonic Advance*, *Sonic Advance 2*, *Sonic Rivals* (collectible card), *Sonic Rivals 2* (collectible card), *Sonic Chronicles* (mentioned), *Sonic Colors* (DS (cameo))

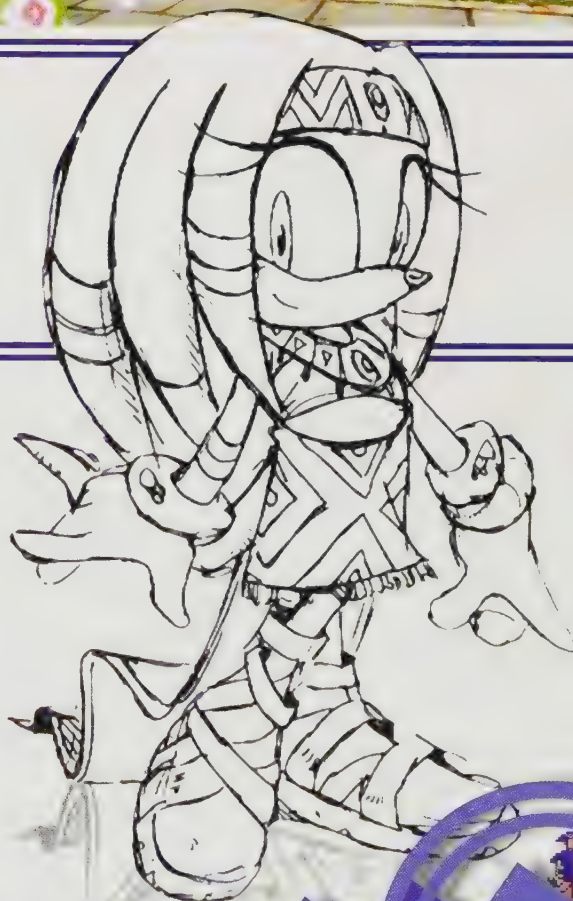
**Defining characteristic:** Exists in spirit form as a ball of light

Designed by Yuji Uekawa, Tikal appeared for the first time in *Sonic Adventure* as a ball of light guiding Sonic and his friends. She belonged to an echidna tribe that lived centuries before Sonic's time. The daughter of Chief Pachacamac, she detests violence, and attempted to dissuade her father from his warmongering ways several times. She is peaceful and benevolent, willing to sacrifice herself for the greater good. Unfortunately, that's exactly what she had to do to seal Chaos within the Master Emerald. ■





Sonic Adventure (Dreamcast — 1998)

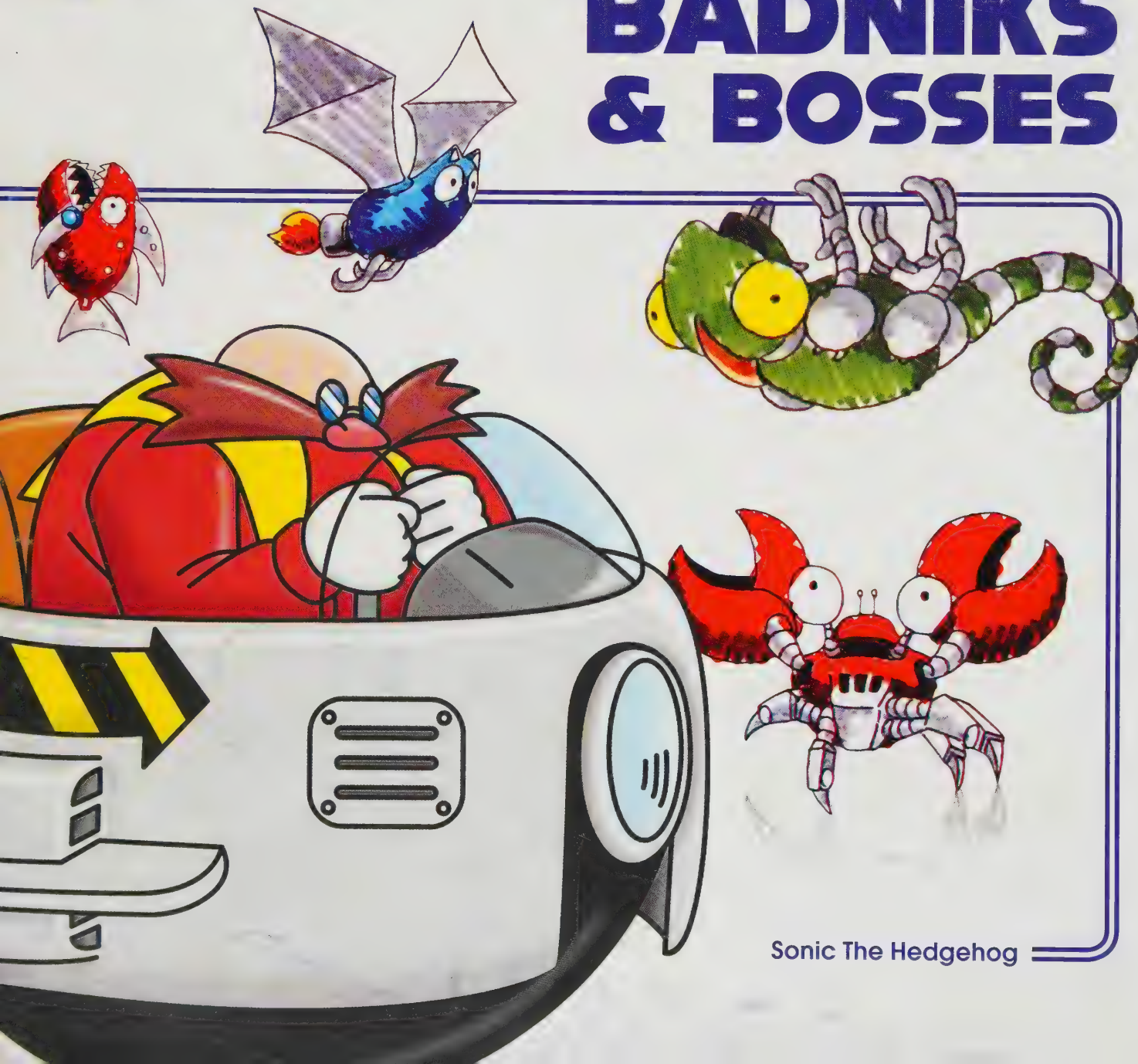


## Trivia

- Just like Pachacamac, Tikal got her name from a famous temple in Central America, similar to the one in the Mystic Ruins.
- In Mayan, "Tikal" has several meanings, one of which is "bread".

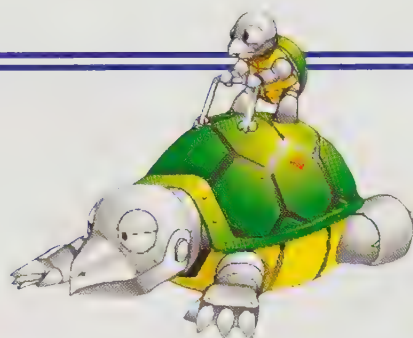
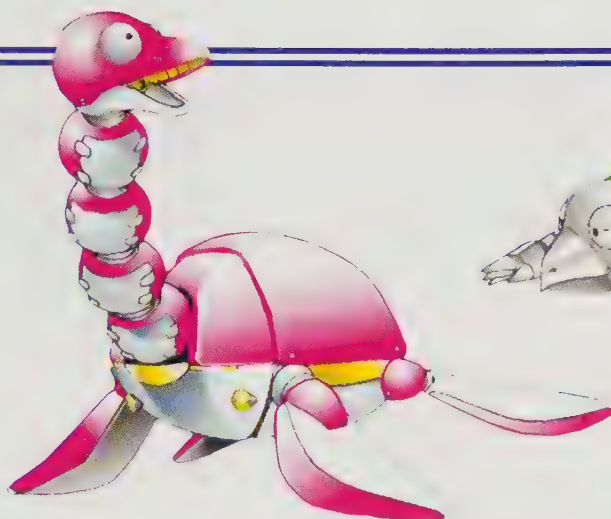


# **BADNIKS & BOSSES**



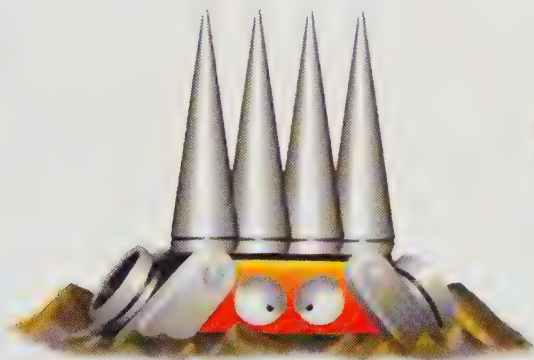
Sonic The Hedgehog





Sonic The Hedgehog 2

Sonic The Hedgehog 3

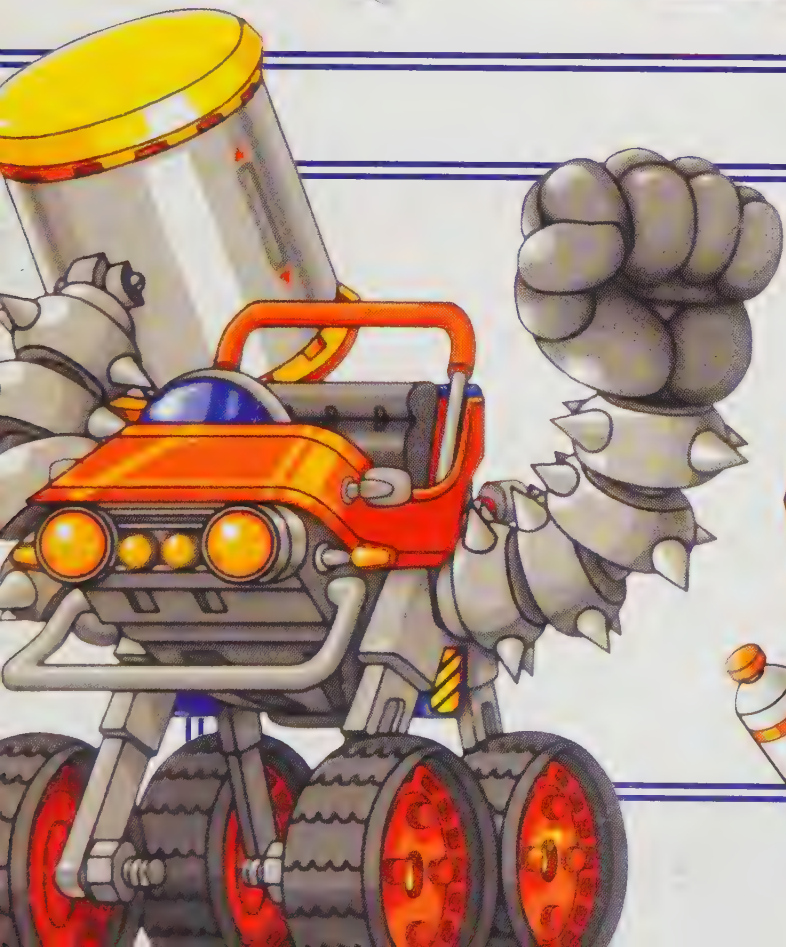


# CHARACTERS

Sonic & Knuckles



Sonic Advance 2

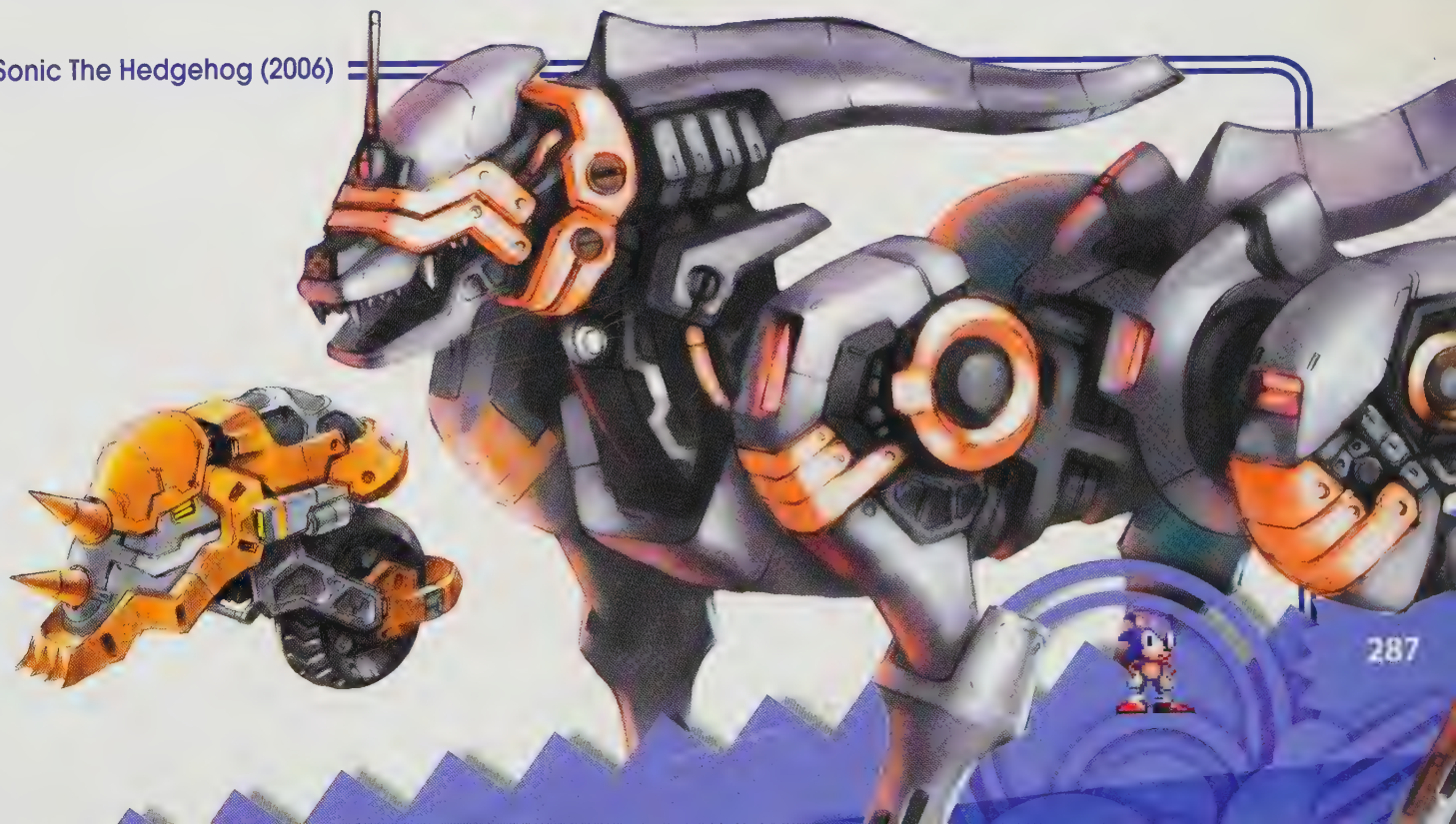




## Sonic and the Secret Rings



## Sonic The Hedgehog (2006)



# CHARACTERS

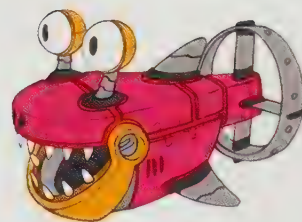
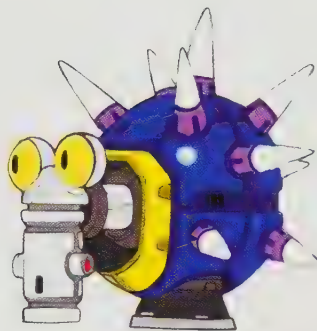
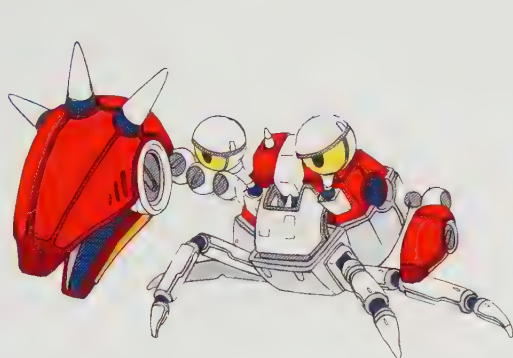
## Sonic Unleashed



## Sonic and the Black Knight







Sonic The Hedgehog 4

Sonic Generations





# EXTRA ZONE

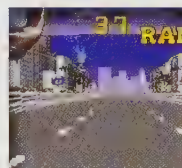






# SONIC: FUNNY CAMEOS

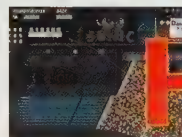
It's hard not to be in the spotlight when you're such a big star. Like any true icon, Sonic has made many cameo appearances throughout his career, usually in an official manner but occasionally without knowing it. Whether they are full-on tributes or simple references, many of Sonic's cameo appearances throughout the years are listed here.



1991

## Rad Mobile (SEGA, arcade)

Released in arcades, *Rad Mobile* was Sonic's very first appearance in a video game. He was featured as a key ring hanging on the rear-view mirror.



## Sports Talk Baseball (SEGA, Genesis)

Year after year, Sonic made many appearances in sports games. In this Genesis-exclusive baseball game, one had to throw the ball as high as possible to see the mascot on a billboard.



## Joe Montana II: Sports Talk Football

(SEGA, Genesis)

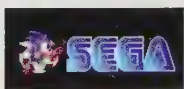
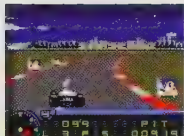
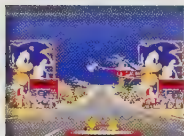
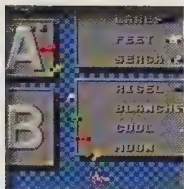
In order to see Sonic on the scoreboard of this American football game, players had to score as many touchdowns as possible.



## Art Alive (SEGA, Genesis)

Sonic was one of the many graphical elements available in this drawing software.





## 1992

### Ayrton Senna's Super Monaco GP II

(SEGA, Genesis)

In the "World Championship" mode of this popular racing game, Sonic appeared at the bottom of the screen when players chose their rival.

### OutRunners (SEGA, arcade/Genesis)

First made for arcades by AM1, *OutRunners* showed Sonic on a billboard placed alongside the road. On the Genesis version, he could be seen next to Tails, who was flying the Tornado.

### SEGA Game Pack 4 in 1 (SEGA, Game Gear)

Only available on the Game Gear, this cartridge included four games. Here, Sonic shows off his talents as a tennis referee.

## 1993

### F1 (SEGA, Master System)

As in most racing games in which Sonic has a cameo, SEGA's mascot is displayed on billboards placed along the first track.

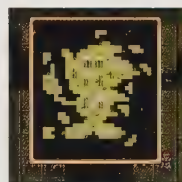
### J. League Pro Striker (SEGA, Genesis)

In this soccer game released in Japan, the hedgehog welcomed you with his studs as soon as the logo appeared.

### Wimbledon Championship Tennis

(SEGA, Genesis)

After he refereed the matches in *SEGA GamePack 4 in 1*, Sonic appeared in a series of advertisements placed in the background of this game's tennis court.



### Tom & Jerry: The Movie

(SEGA, Master System/Game Gear)

Developed by SIMS and sold by SEGA, this adaptation of the Tom & Jerry cartoon pays tribute to the hedgehog in the background of the second level. Posters showing the hero and his trademark blue quills are displayed on the windows of a bookshop.

### Ultimate Soccer (SEGA, Genesis)

In this soccer game, sold exclusively in Europe, players can see Sonic in an icon on the main menu, and also when the SEGA logo appears.

### Shining Force II (SEGA, Genesis)

The *Shining Force* series set the standard for strategy RPGs on the Genesis. Once the final battle is won and the ending credits have rolled, wait five minutes at the final scene and you will unlock a new level of difficulty. Then take another look at the map: it is now shaped like Sonic!

### Popful Mail (SEGA, SEGA CD)

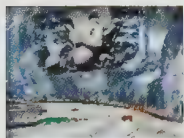
In this action RPG first released on Japanese computers, Mail, the heroine, is seen looking at a notice board during a cutscene. On this board, you can make out a small drawing of Sonic.

### Formula One World Championship

(SEGA, SEGA CD)

Boards displaying Sonic and Tails were hidden in the Donington circuit.





1994

## SEGA Channel (SEGA, Genesis)

Launched in 1994 in the U.S., the SEGA Channel was a subscription-based online downloading service for the Genesis, accessible through a box that could be attached to the console. Sonic made a brief appearance when the unit was first turned on.

## Soleil (SEGA, Genesis)

In this action/adventure game, known in the U.S. under the name *Crusader of Centy*, Sonic is seen sunbathing near Anemone Beach.

## Daytona USA

(SEGA, arcade/Saturn/Dreamcast/PC)

SEGA's mascot was sculpted in rock in the background of the first track in this excellent racing game. During replays, the hedgehog appears as Super Sonic.

## The Amazing Spider-Man vs. The Kingpin

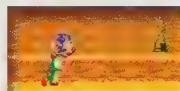
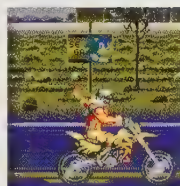
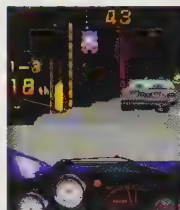
(SEGA, SEGA CD)

Like a subliminal message, a rock carving showing Sonic's face can be seen in this ending. It is to the left of the policeman's head.

## Wacky Worlds Creativity Studio

(SEGA, Genesis/PC/Mac)

Sonic is your guide in this educational game developed by HeadGames. Tails also appears as one of the game's stickers.



## Phantasy Star IV (SEGA, Genesis)

The last Genesis game in the series, *Phantasy Star IV* also pays tribute to the famous Sonic. Though he cannot be seen in the game, the player can find a book telling of the adventures of a "running hedgehog".

## Gale Racer (SEGA, Saturn)

*Gale Racer* is a Saturn port of the arcade game *Rad Mobile*, and just as in the original game, Sonic appears as a key ring hanging on the rear-view mirror. Here, the key ring changes every 100th race, becoming Tails, Mighty, Eggman, Silver Sonic, Ray, Amy, Metal Sonic, Knuckles and, finally, Super Sonic.

## Streets of Rage 3 (SEGA, Genesis)

The beta version of *Streets of Rage 3* had some content that did not make the final cut. One of these removed elements was a motorbike chase stage. In this level, you could see Sonic on a billboard.

## Bug! (SEGA, Saturn)

The hero of this pleasant platformer, Bug, had to face the legendary hedgehog in a bonus race.

1995

## Bugs Bunny in Double Trouble

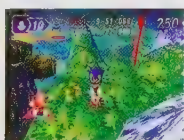
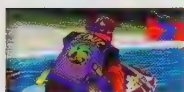
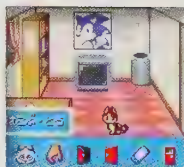
(SEGA, Genesis)

During his adventure, Bugs ran across a pair of empty shoes that bore more than a passing resemblance to Sonic's.

## Virtua Fighter 2 (SEGA, Saturn)

In the Saturn version of *Virtua Fighter 2*, players could see Sonic on a brick wall in the background of the hidden level "Chicago".





## 1996

### Neko Daisuki! (SEGA, Game Gear)

This life simulation, released only in Japan on the Game Gear, allowed the player to decorate their virtual cat's room with a poster of the hedgehog.

### Last Bronx

(SEGA, arcade/Saturn/PlayStation 2)

Developed by AM3 for the SEGA Model 2 arcade system, *Last Bronx* included a nice poster of Sonic on one of the buildings in Cross Street, Tommy's level.

### SEGA Ski Super G (SEGA, arcade)

Released only in arcades, *SEGA Ski Super G* included a gorgeous ice sculpture of Sonic, which you could see on the White Forest track.

### WaveRunner (SEGA, arcade)

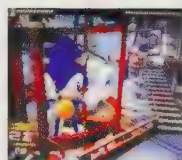
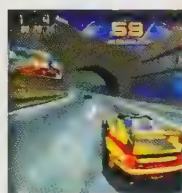
We all know Sonic loves sports. In this jet ski racing game, the hedgehog was featured on the rider's life jacket.

### Christmas NiGHTS (SEGA, Saturn)

Bundled with select magazines and Saturn games in December 1996, *Christmas NiGHTS* included many bonuses. Among them is the ability to control Sonic in the Spring Valley level in Time Attack mode.

### Fighting Vipers (SEGA, Saturn)

Even though Sonic did not directly appear in *Fighting Vipers*, the game referenced the Lunar Fox, Tails' ship in *Sonic The Fighters*, in the Saturn version's opening.



### SEGA Super GT (SEGA, arcade)

Very similar to *Daytona USA*, *SEGA Super GT* paid tribute to Sonic and Tails on a billboard placed at the entrance of a tunnel. It was visible on the Dolphin Tunnel track and used an image available in *Sonic the Screen Saver*.

## 1998

### Spikeout (SEGA, arcade)

In this arcade beat 'em up, Sonic was seen standing proudly near an elevator.

## 1999

### SEGA Bass Fishing (SEGA, arcade/Dreamcast/Wii)

Sonic as bait? That was the form he took in *SEGA Bass Fishing*. Players had to complete all five tournaments in Consumer Mode to unlock it.

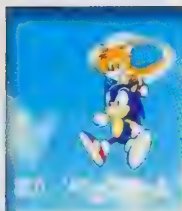
### NBA 2K (SEGA, Dreamcast)

In *NBA 2K*, the player could create a basketball team called the "Hedgehogs", whose logo was Sonic holding a basketball.

### ChuChu Rocket! (SEGA, Dreamcast)

Once players completed all 25 puzzles in the Stage Challenge mode, the ChuChus would be replaced by the adorable Chao, who debuted in *Sonic Adventure*.





## Shenmue (SEGA, Dreamcast)

An emblematic title on many levels, *Shenmue* had several mini-games and bonuses to discover. For example, players could collect little figurines that could be found in Gashapon machines. Of course, Sonic and his friends were among them!

## 2000

### Jet Set Radio (SEGA, Dreamcast)

Based on urban culture, *Jet Set Radio* allowed players to paint graffiti all over the towns of Tokyo-To. Several optional graphical elements, which could be downloaded from the Internet, were taken directly from *Sonic Adventure*. SEGA's mascot also appeared at the end of the game on a billboard.

### Phantasy Star Online Version 2

(SEGA, Dreamcast)

Between June 16th and 23rd, 2011, players of the Dreamcast version of *Phantasy Star Online Version 2* in Japan were able to meet Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, and Eggman within the game.

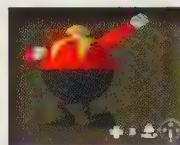
## 2001

### Segagaga (SEGA, Dreamcast)

This surprising multi-genre title let players take over SEGA. Given that, it would have been impossible not to meet Sonic, as well as many other figureheads of the brand.

### Alien Front Online (SEGA, Dreamcast)

In this game where tanks and alien spaceships shoot everything in sight, Sonic appeared on a beautiful billboard.



### Shenmue II (SEGA, Dreamcast/Xbox)

Just like its illustrious predecessor, *Shenmue II* allowed players to collect a ton of Gashapon figures, including Sonic, Robotnik, Tails, Fang, Amy, Knuckles, Bark, Bean, Super Sonic, and Metal Sonic.

### Beach Spikers (SEGA, arcade/GameCube)

In this summery beach volleyball game, a huge inflatable Sonic stood on the last field in Arcade Mode.

### Virtua Striker 3 (SEGA, arcade/GameCube)

Sonic and the gang were featured heavily in this famous soccer game, developed by Amusement Vision. Indeed, the hidden team "FC Sonic" allowed you to play as a team consisting of Tails, Knuckles, Amy, Eggman, six Chao and, of course, Sonic.

### Virtua Cop 3 (SEGA, arcade)

Sonic appeared on the tutorial screen in the third title of this famous shooting game series designed by AM2.

## 2003

### Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg

(SEGA, GameCube)

It was not surprising to see Sonic make a cameo appearance in *Billy Hatcher*, since this pleasant action game/platformer was developed by Yuji Naka and Sonic Team.

## 2004

### Feel the Magic: XY/XX (SEGA, DS)

Developed by Sonic Team, it wouldn't do for the hedgehog to miss out on this mini-game compilation. If you started the game with a *Sonic Advance*, *Sonic Advance 2*, *Sonic Advance 3*, *Sonic Pinball Party*, or *Sonic Battle* cartridge in the DS' GBA port, you would unlock a Sonic hat.





2006

### OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast

(SEGA, Xbox/PlayStation 2/PSP/PC)

Sonic appeared twice in the Casino Town circuit in this installment of SEGA's most famous racing series: *OutRun*.

### Phantasy Star Universe

(SEGA, Xbox 360/PlayStation 2/PC)

It was only logical to see Sonic in the sequel to *Phantasy Star Online*. This time, the hero and his companions (Tails, Amy, and Knuckles) appeared as giant statues. Each year on June 23rd, players can meet both Sonic and Tails in the game to celebrate the former's birthday.

07

### EA Rally Revo

(EA, Xbox 360/PlayStation 3/PC)

Sonic had his 15 minutes of fame in *Formula USA*. This time, it was Shadow's turn to be featured in a racing game.



2008

### SEGA Splash! Golf (SEGA, PC)

Playable online, *SEGA Splash! Golf* featured a gorgeous course in the classic Green Hill Zone. As for Sonic, he joined players during their games.



### Samba de Amigo (SEGA, Wii)

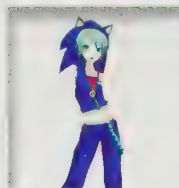
This music game (which was previously released on the Dreamcast) featured an overexcited Sonic. The hedgehog was not shy about exhibiting his dancing talents. His stage? Green Hill Zone.

2011

### Hatsune Miku: Project DIVA Extend

(SEGA, PSP)

The virtual singer Hatsune Miku, star of her own famous rhythm game series, celebrated Sonic's 20th birthday by wearing a costume bearing his likeness.







## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

### Books, press

*16 Bit MD Taizen*, Ohtabooks — 2004  
*Beep Mega Drive*, Softbank, Japan — 1993, October  
*Continue*, Ohtabooks — 2001, November  
*Famitsu*, Enterbrain — 1993, June  
*Game Museum Vol.1*, Japan Culture Press — 2004  
*La Saga des Jeux Vidéo*, Daniel Ichbiah, Editions Pix'n Love — 2011  
*Nintendo Official Magazine, Future* — 2005, February  
*Pix'n Love #6*, Editions Pix'n Love — 2008  
*SEGA Consumer History*, Enterbrain — 2002  
*SEGA Saturn Magazine*, EMAP — 1997, October

### Interviews

ANTHONY CHAU, interview Takashi Iizuka, *IGN.com*, <http://uk.ign.com/> — 2001, June  
ADAM DOREE, interview Yoshi Hashimoto, *Kikizo.com*, <http://kikizo.com/> — 2008, November  
ADAM DOREE, interview Yuji Naka, *Kikizo.com*, <http://kikizo.com/> — 2009, February  
BRANDON SHEFFIELD, interview Naoto Ōshima, *Gamasutra.com*, <http://www.gamasutra.com> — 2009  
KEN HOROWITZ, interview Mark Cerny, *SEGA-16.com*, <http://www.sega-16.com/> — 2006  
KEN HOROWITZ, interview Peter Morawiec, *SEGA-16.com*, <http://www.sega-16.com/> — 2007  
KEN HOROWITZ, interview Spencer Nilsen, *SEGA-16.com*, <http://www.sega-16.com/> — 2008  
LAURA PARKER, interview Takashi Iizuka, *GameSpot UK.com*, <http://uk.gamespot.com/> — 2011, April  
MARC PETRONILLE, *Sonic X-Treme* - interview Christian Senn, *Pix'n Love #6*, Editions Pix'n Love — 2008  
MIKE JACKSON, interview Yuji Naka, *Nintendo Official Magazine, Future* — 2005, February  
PHIL THEOBALD, interview Takashi Yuda, *GameSpy*, <http://uk.gamespy.com/> — 2006, January  
WILLIAM AUDUREAU, interview Takashi Iizuka, Paris — 2011, October  
NO AUTHOR, interview Masato Nakamura, *Sonic City*, <http://www.sonicretro.org/>  
NO AUTHOR, interview Jon Burton, *SEGA Saturn Magazine*, EMAP — 1997  
NO AUTHOR, interview Yuji Naka, *SEGA Saturn Magazine*, EMAP — 1998  
NO AUTHOR, interview Takashi Iizuka, *GameSpot UK.com*, <http://uk.gamespot.com/> — 2006, May  
NO AUTHOR, interview Yuji Naka/Takashi Iizuka, *SEGA.com*, <http://www.sega.com/>

### Websites

*GameSpy* — <http://uk.gamespy.com/>  
*Game Tap* — <http://www.gametap.com/>  
*IGN* — <http://uk.ign.com/>  
*Kikizo* — <http://kikizo.com/>  
*MobyGames* — <http://www.mobygames.com/>  
*Sega - 16* — <http://www.sega-16.com/>  
*Sega Japan*, SEGA Meisaku Album Vol.1/Vol.4 — <http://sega.jp/>  
*Sega Retro* — <http://segaretro.org/>  
*Sonic Retro* — <http://www.sonicretro.org/>

### Videos, documentaries

*Sonic Adventure production announcement meeting*  
*Sonic The Hedgehog GameTap Retrospective*, <http://www.gametap.com/> — 2009

## SPECIAL THANKS

---

Sissel Heno (SEGA Europe), Isabel Neal-Hook (SEGA Europe), Takashi Iizuka (SEGA of Japan), Nana Ishizawa (SEGA of Japan), Stéphane Rakotondrainibe, James Rebours, Franck Sébastien (SEGA France), Shigefimu Tanzawa (SEGA of Japan), Yukari Takeuchi (SEGA of Japan), Charles Pivert.

**SONIC**  
**THE**  
**HEDGEHOG™**





pix'n love  
EDITIONS



©SEGA

Relive the epic adventures of one of the most famous mascots in the history of video games - **Sonic!** Born in 1991 on the Mega Drive, SEGA's legendary mascot was immediately adopted by millions of players and was launched into superstardom!

This one-of-a-kind book recounts twenty years of history and glory, during which Sonic managed to thrill the millions of players who tried to master him! It's been twenty years of fun, but also of technological innovations and creativity.

Through detailed interviews, anecdotes, never-before-seen artwork and sketches, **The History of Sonic the Hedgehog** unveils the hidden side of the blue speedster and opens the doors of his unique and imaginative world.



53499

ISBN: 978-1-926778-96-9  
\$34.99 US

Printed in Hong Kong

